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ZZAP! 64



COMMODORE GAMES
C64 • CONSOLE • AMIGA

GOLDEN AXE
Best beat-'em-up of 1990?

SHOW REPORT
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NOVEMBER 1990

ZZAP! 64/AMIGA

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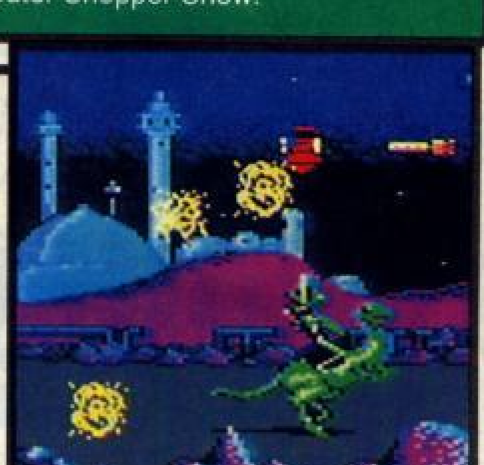
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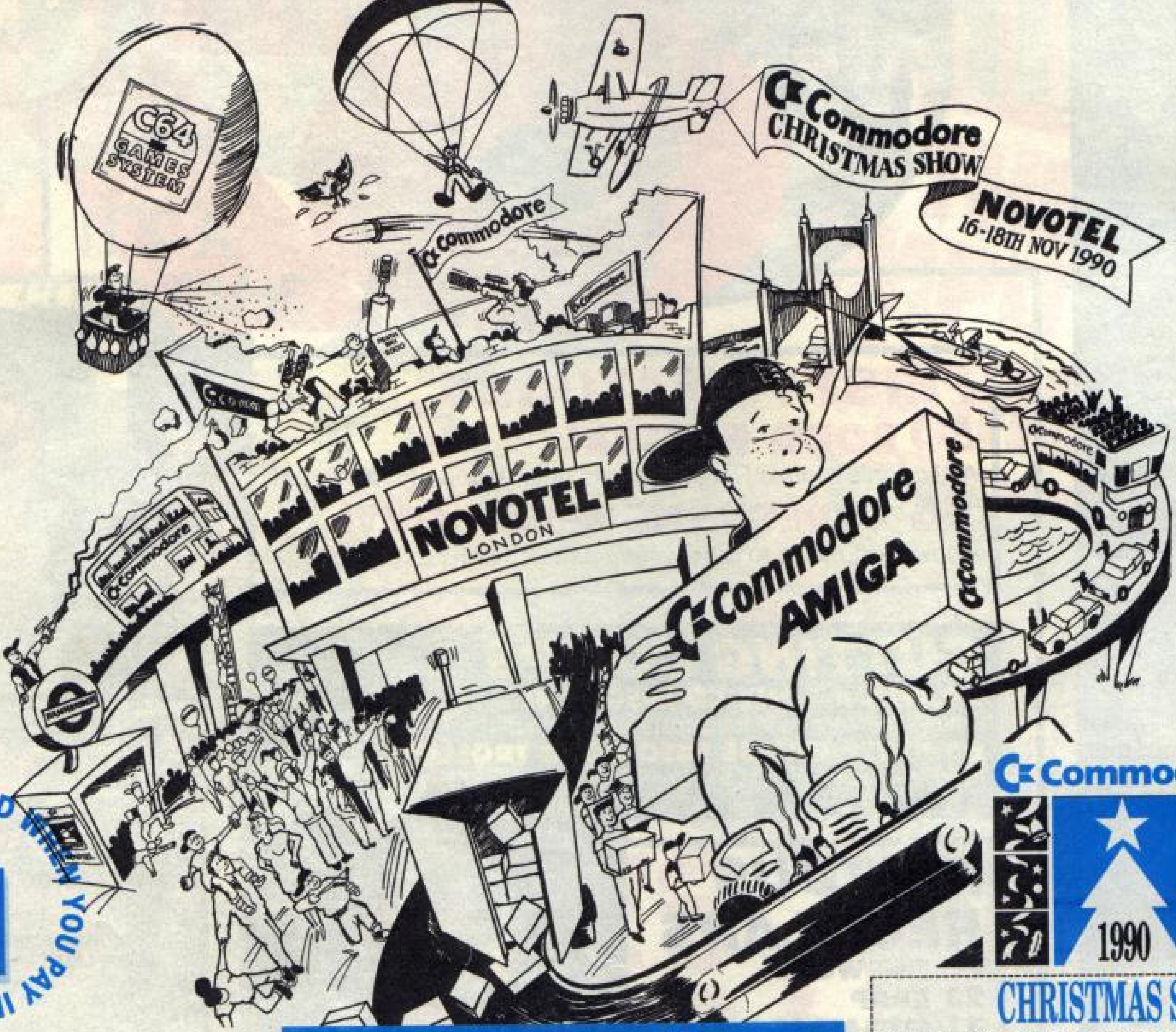
SLASHING SOFTWARE

REVIEWS

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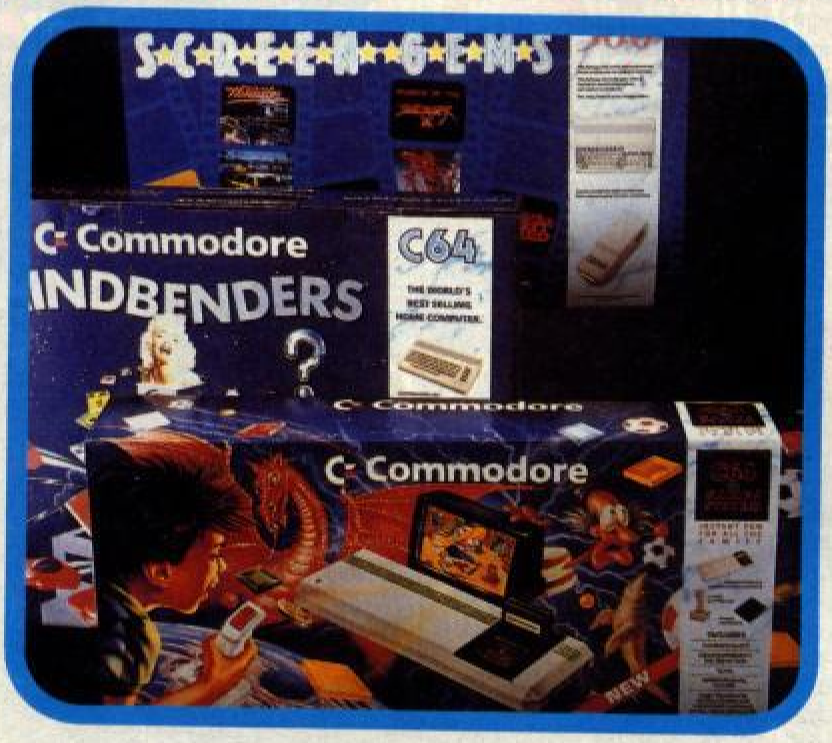
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UK CES '90

COMMODORE ROCKS SHOW

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, RoboCop, *Nightbreed* creatures, Betty Boo and 40,000 visitors have ensured another hugely successful computer show. Commodore had the biggest stand and a clutch of headline-making announcements, from a nationwide CDTV beta test to massive software bundles to spectacular sales predictions. Ocean dropped their own bombshell with plans to go virtually cartridge-only on the C64 front! STUART WYNNE strapped himself into Dr Frey's rocket car and arrived in London before he'd left Ludlow.



★ The new, smartly repackaged Commodore bundles.

● Commodore kicked off the show with a Thursday briefing at the non-user-friendly time of 9.00am. Following the glamour of their impressive, high-tech show stand, the Ramada Inn setting was a bit of a letdown. After introducing myself, I was allowed to wander around a small hall with rows of plastic chairs facing a pile of Commodore packaging, a plain table and a white slide screen. It was like a school assembly! Various suited Commodore people wandered about eating snacks, some beside a table with a few Amigas (running *Beast II*), C64GSs (*International Soccer*) and C64s ('I've never seen that message on any machine,' remarked one gentleman after being asked to 'rewind and press space'). Journalists were conspicuous by their absence early on and I managed to get an interview with Kelly Sumner, Commodore's National Sales Manager.

Mr Sumner (no relation to Paul!) was obviously an early riser and his enthusiasm was infectious. Commodore products would be carried by virtually every high-street chain for Xmas. The GS would also be in all the major mail order catalogues.

Moreover, Commodore had been working closely with software houses to get software back into these chains. Dixons, for one, would be taking cartridge software — which avoided the unreliability and piracy that had stopped them taking tape and disk. Cartridge prices would range between £25 and £20 pre-Xmas, with prices hopefully falling to £15 afterwards for some games as volume picked up. There were 55 titles ready for pre-Xmas release so far, hopefully more to come.

COMMODORE BLACK LABEL?

● There would also be TV advertising, 40-second commercials promoting the entire range of Commodore products. 'It'll be like the Carling Black Label Dambusters ad where the product isn't mentioned for 30-35 seconds.' The mind boggled but Kelly refused to elaborate on this 'attention getting scheme'.

Nevertheless he expected a 'phenomenal' Xmas for the C64 with a superb new software bundle. The £159 pack will include a C64, C2N, two joysticks plus two games packs. Ocean's *Night Moves* contains *Shadow Warriors* plus the still unreleased *Secret Agent*, *Midnight Resistance* and *Nightbreed*. Domark's *Mindbenders* pack is supposedly more educational with *Trivial Pursuit*, *Snare*, *Confuzion* and *Split Personalities*. Kelly expected this to sell more than the GS, because most parents still wanted some educational element in their purchase. 'The console market is big, but not as big as some people expect.'

Commodore is also repackaging its peripherals. Leading the way is the 1571 disk drive, now coming with the same impressive software packs as the C64. It will also be free of competition from products such as the Excelerator. The C64's odd, and sluggish, disk interface uses protected technology which other manufacturers had been copying. Commodore has put a stop to that, completely cornering the market. But it's also cut the price from £179.99 to £129.99.

Similar software bundles accompany the Amiga's £99.99 501 megabyte-upgrade (Mindscape's brand new one-meg-only *Captive*), £99.99 1011 disk drive (Elite's *Gremlins II*) and £399.99 590 hard disk (*Fantavision*, *Comic Setter* and *Spritz*).

Despite this, Commodore's prediction of the future mirrors Ocean's — dominated by cartridges and CD ROM. The four-game compilation which comes with the C64GS will soon be on sale for £29.99 with two joysticks for C64 owners. A question about how long the C64 had left drew a laugh from Kelly, after twelve years with the company the longevity of the C64 still amazed him. He expected it to last another two years 'in its present form'.

Were there any plans to develop the C64? 'Commodore is a fully integrated company, handling everything from the ▶

UK CES '90
COMMODORE ROCKS SHOW

silicon to the marketing. We have people in West Cheshire and all they do is look at product, thinking about ideas for developing for it. Everything from 8-bit to 32-bit is considered. There'll be new products next year, maybe a new Amiga.'

There are already rumours of a one-meg Amiga called the A500-Professional with the Enhanced Chip Set (ECS) plus Workbench 2.0. The ECS will offer facilities for one megabyte of chip RAM, allowing enhanced graphics and sonics. A price point of £499 has been suggested, although Commodore currently deny any such plans.

Kelly's hints at a C64 development are considerably more tenuous, but at least indicate strong commitment to the C64. What Kelly was most determined to emphasise was the UK installed user base of 500,000 to 750,000 C64s, all of which are compatible with cartridges. This obviously massively reduced the risk of producing cartridge software. By comparison Amstrad has yet to sell a single GX4000 compatible machine.

FRUITFUL FORECAST

● When the official briefing began, Commodore UK boss Steve Franklin was quick to boast about 'a fantastic year' with numerous digs at Atari, who weren't attending the show and are losing the ST/Amiga war. More generously Steve noted that 1.3 million sales were expected by all computer manufacturers, a figure which indicated a return to the 'halcyon days of the early Eighties'.

Spearheading Commodore's Xmas offensive was the C64GS, being launched today. Steve expected to sell 80,000 before 1991 with strong software support. As for the C64, with its 'educational' component, 140,000 sales were expected — 8,000 more than last year. The Screen Gems Amiga pack, including *Nightbreed*, *Back To The Future II*, *Days Of Thunder*, *Beast II* and *Deluxe Paint II*, was expected to shift 130,000 units. There were firm orders for all these, and Amigas couldn't be built fast enough. Included in this figure is an educational Amiga pack for the seven-and-up age market: costing £599 it comes with a one-meg upgrade, an introductory video and book, plus nine software titles including *Deluxe Paint II* and *Let's Spell At Home*.

The most exciting Amiga news was left until last, namely the launch of the CDTV.

Steve had just been to Frankfurt and 'persuaded them to do the product properly. The potential marketplace is worth 4-6 billion pounds. The product has to be properly tested.' From the third week in November 1500 beta-test CDTVs will be put on sale. This will be the biggest field test ever conducted by Commodore, with 500-600 going to private individuals, 700-800 going to education and 500-600 going to businesses. They'll be sold at discounted prices for two to three months of testing, backed by national press advertising. There'll be 25-30 software titles at the 'pre-launch'.

Products will be developed from the results of these tests for an official worldwide launch in February. CDTV 'will become the central point for home entertainment'. Philips' rival CDI system won't be available until 1992, by which time CDTV will be the 'standard'. Thankfully a CDROM upgrade for the A500 is under consideration: it's technically 'feasible' and if a survey of A500 owners shows demand, one might be available for June 1991. It won't be cheap though. For the first year Steve expected CDTV sales of 35,000-50,000. Retailers were looking for a product to replace video recorders and camcorders — the latest gadget craze would be the CDTV.

★ Mirrorsoft's movie themed stand featured glamorous usherettes.





★ That's show business — there was continuous entertainment on the specially built stage and video wall.

OCEAN SHOCKER

● For the moment though, the C64GS is centre of excitement and Ocean are firmly behind it. From now on virtually *all* Ocean C64 games will be on cartridge *alone*. The only exceptions are games Ocean are legally prevented from putting on cartridge due to agreements over producing Nintendo games (which must be the only cartridge versions).

Cartridge-only games include *SCI* (Mid November), *Navy Seals* (TBA), *Toki* (Early December), *Plotting* (Early October) and *RoboCop II* (End November, supposedly, but the programmer's left!). For the future, Ocean have the licence to write games based on *The Simpsons* cartoon series, *Wings Of The Apache* (the helicopter version of *Top Gun*) and *Darkman* (from the maker of *Evil Dead*, it features a disfigured vigilante).

The first cartridge game could well be *SCI*. Currently being compressed to fit into a 128K cartridge, the game will make use of Cheetah's two-fire button joystick. Using a variant on the old paddles system, where two were connected to one port, the joystick gives 'A' and 'B' buttons. The price for Ocean cartridges is a very reasonable £19.99. For Amiga owners Ocean have launched a 16-bit Hit Squad with imminent £7.99 releases including *Wizball*, *Super Hang On*, *R-Type* and *Batman: The Caped Crusader*.

Domark share Ocean's cartridge enthusiasm, with *Hard Drivin'*, *Vindicators*, *Cyberball*, *Badlands* and *The Spy Who Loved Me* all likely to be cartridge-ized with improved presentation. Domark also promise CDTV versions of *Trival Pursuit* (full colour pix and stereo sound), *Pacmania* and the murder mystery *Herewith The Clues*.

Other software houses were more reticent on the subject of cartridges, neglecting to hype any forthcoming products. Thankfully Commodore have made available a list of games they think are 'coming soon' (see below). The list shouldn't be taken as rock solid, but it's impressive all the same. What's more, plenty of other software houses are interested as well. Gremlin's Product Manager revealed they would very likely develop a game, although whether it was released would depend on the state of the market. In his opinion it was easier to convert disk games to cartridge than to tape, a couple of weeks was all that was needed. C64 *Venus Flytrap* might well be Gremlin's first GS cartridge game. They also have a CDTV game in production using an ex-Don Bluth animator.

CONSOLE GOODIES

● Commodore's 'Coming Soon' list.

ANCO: *Kick Off*, *Turrican 2* and *X-Out*.
COMMODORE: *Jack Attack* plus *Klax*, *Fiendish Freddy*, *Flimbo's Quest* and *International Soccer*.
DOMARK: See text.
EPYX: *The Games: Winter Edition*, *The Games: Summer Edition* and *California Games*.
ELECTRONIC ARTS: *Subbuteo* and *Orchus*.
THE DISK CO.: *Fast Food*, *MicroProse Soccer*, *Rick Dangerous*, *Pro Skateboard*, *Pro Tennis Tour* and *Stunt Car Racer*.
INFOGRAMES: *Prohibition* and *Bubble Ghost*.
MICROPROSE: *Rick Dangerous* and *Starglider 2*.
MINDSCAPE: *Ultima VI*.
MIRRORSOFT: *Bloodwych* and *Falcon*.
OCEAN: see text.
SYSTEM 3: *IK Deluxe*,*Myth*, *Vendetta*, *Turbocharge*, *Ninja Remix* and *Ninja III*, (The last two are cartridge-only.)
TITUS: *Battlestorm*, *Crazy Bikes*, *Crazy Cars II*, *Dick Tracy*, *Fire and Forget 2* and *Wild Streets*.
THALAMUS: Future games will be released first on tape/disk then rereleased on cartridge in pairs. Before Xmas you can expect *Armalyte* and *Sanxion*, *Hawkeye* and *Quedex*, *Delta* and *Hunter's Moon*. *Creatures* and *Summer Camp* might follow, along with *Snare*, *Retrograde* and *Heatseeker*.
UBISOFT: *Pro Tennis Tour 2* and *B.A.T.*.
US GOLD: *Moonwalker*.

"FLYING THIS MISSION IS LIKE...



• Probe/Virgin, C64 £9.99 cassette, £14.99 disk

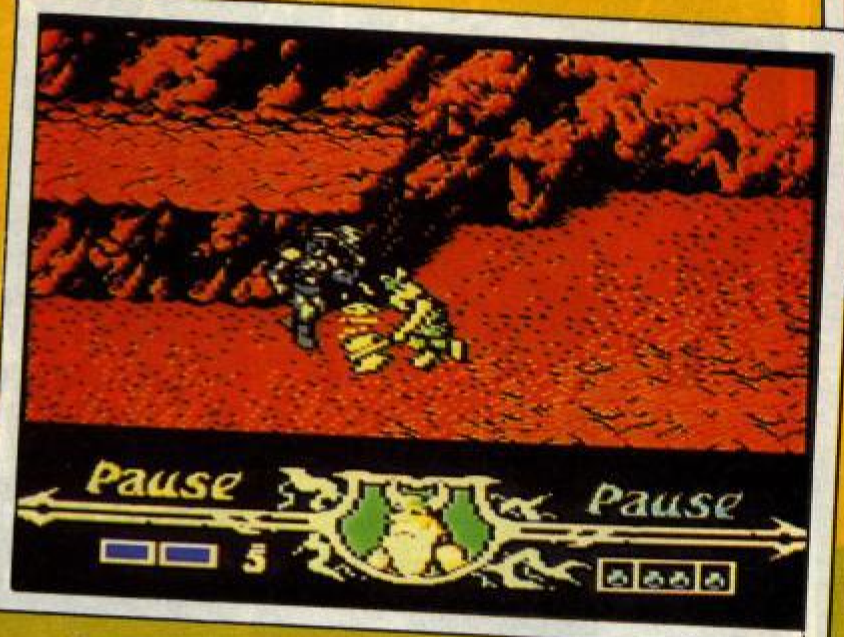
GOLDEN

Death Adder is to happy families what Phil is to seat springs — absolutely lethal. There's nothing he likes so much as knocking on people's doors, introducing himself, then lopping off some heads. His latest deed of unabashed badness is stealing the fabulous Golden Axe. For centuries this magical weapon has been secure in a castle in the land of Yuria. Its presence has ensured peace and prosperity, but now its theft has plunged the land into chaos.

Three brave people have decided enough is enough. Axe Battler is a muscle-bound barbarian whose favourite weapon is a hefty broadsword. He can't move that quickly, but he makes up for it with great strength. His mother was killed by Death Adder and he's determined to gain revenge. Gilius Thunderhead lost his brother to the Death Adder, and this feisty dwarf carries a massive axe. He's quick on his feet and has a pulverising headbutt. Tyris Flare's favourite move is a shoulder block and she carries a sword, just like the barbarian. But she's the most agile character and has the most intense determination — both her parents were murdered by Death Adder.

At the temple the trio find a priest who can offer one of them incredible magical powers. Gilius can have powerful lightning, Tyris firestorms and Battler explosions. All these can only be activated by getting potions from the thieves who periodically run across the screen. Each time you hit one you get a potion, increasing the power of your magic when used. Thieves also drop food to restore energy. You have three units of energy, five lives and three continue-plays, each with three lives.

Each of the main characters has a staggering number of moves, including two walking speeds (push right twice to run), piledrivers where you leap up to make lethal downchopping blows, kicks and so on. There's also two types of dragon to ride on, one breathes fire while the other



★ Gilius the dwarf makes a low blow with his hefty axe.



This game just reaches out and grabs you. The beautiful presentation screens are the perfect intro for some superlative gameplay. The enemy characters look great, and move surprisingly well. On later levels they really rush at you, the skeletons positively spring back to their feet when knocked down.

Fortunately there's three different characters for you to play, from the agile Tyris to the well-muscled Battler. Besides unique abilities, the characters all have masses of moves. To begin with, simple swordswipes are enough but later on you'll need to master more complex moves such as shoulder butts (double tap right) and the powerful piledriver. The huge range of moves, all superbly animated, mean you're always experimenting to work out the best tactics.

This makes for some great beat-'em-up action, but there's other elements too. Hacking at the fast-moving thieves for magic potions is good fun, bringing a spectacular reward when you activate the flickscreen magic later on. Then there's the dragons, which are brilliant to stomp round and roast villains. All in all, gameplay has been superbly implemented putting it in completely different league from such tired beat-'em-up conversions as *Shadow Warriors* and *Vigilante*. But what lifts it into Gold Medal status is the superlative finish, the extraordinary graphics, presentation and overall effort. Written by Visual FX for the C64 alone, this is an audio-visual treat for your C64 and can't be missed!

★ Tyris calls up the most impressive magical effect, a huge fast-moving dragon that fills the screen with fire.



AXE

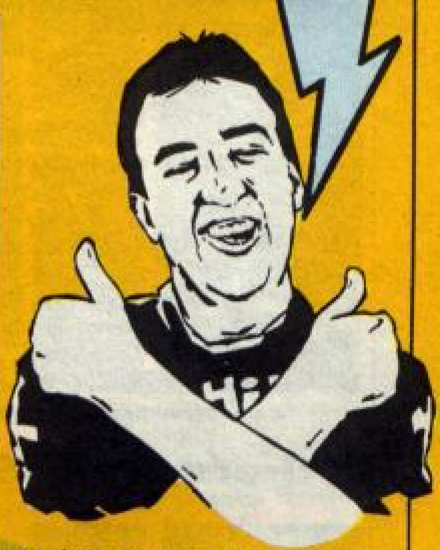


★ The Barbarian uses a piledriving move on an Amazon woman.

spits lethal energy. They're also fast, can make crunching headbutts and disappear after just two hits!

The game pits you against ogres with spiked clubs, amazon women, axemen, skeletons and hulking end-of-leve baddies such as Sumos and ultimately the Death Adder himself. Each villain takes you on one at a time. Sometimes you have to defeat four of them before the screen can scroll forward, each baddy taking several hits to fall and usually getting up for more before dying. More powerful blows down the baddies faster. There are five levels in all, each a multiload.

After *Turbo*, Mark Kelly and Steve Crow have done another superlative conversion. The only compromise is the way you only fight one enemy at a time, but the action is incredibly hectic anyway. The large variety of opponents all attack in different ways and show a great deal of intelligence as they dodge your blows: unlike most beat-'em-ups you need to vary your method of attack to succeed. Excellent sound effects and superb animation, complete with blur lines and whooshing FX on the swinging weapons, add to the excitement as you hack your way through gorgeously drawn scenery — the detail on the eagle-head bridge is incredible. I also appreciated the clever strobe effect of magic potions with a range of dramatic effects for each of the three heroes. But my favourite scene just has to be the bit where you ride that cute little dragon — even if you do resemble Bernie Clifton on speed as you run around, breathing fire and doing headbutts!





★ The fire-breathing dragon showing off its stuff — it can also do lethal headbutts.



Two Gold Medals in a row, is this a first? *Golden Axe* was surprisingly successful in the arcades and the resulting conversion is slick enough to stand up to even the Megadrive version. The title music is great and in-game FX include neat pseudo-samples such as hitting the thief. Hats off again to Mark, Steve and the Maniacs for bringing across the feel, mood and playability of the arcade original. For me, little things like the different status panels and intro portraits make the game. Mark and Steve have gone out of their way to implement things that needn't have gone in (witness the little flames bouncing around when Tyris's magic is used). The moves take a few goes at most to master but once you're proficient they're very easy to use.

OK, after all that praise, it's confession time as I'm the slightly negative one of the bunch this time round, since I thought the original coin-op lacked a bit of action. The single opponents certainly keep you busy, but I was a little worried that it can lead to repetition of moves and subsequent gameplay. Saying that, I can't think of any other C64 game of this type which comes close on the production front, all-round gloss and playability. Spot on.

PRESENTATION 96%
Excellent: intro load with superb title page, character portraits and selection screen. Continue-plays and good outro.

GRAPHICS 97%
Beautiful, detail-packed backgrounds for large and superbly animated sprites. The main characters have an incredible number of moves, while the flickerscreen magic is excellent.

SOUND 93%
A choice of either superslick Maniacs music or FX, the latter a bit sparse but good with a great whooshing sound for sword swipes.

HOOKABILITY 97%
Instantly playable, the great intro sets the atmosphere perfectly and level one is designed to be fairly easy for beginners. Completing it should be no problem but...

LASTABILITY 94%
...later levels are much tougher. Superb production values will keep you coming back for more.

OVERALL 96%
A perfectly produced beat-'em-up, oozing quality from every pixel. Shows just what the C64 can do.



★ The smooth vertical scrolling means the somewhat restricted view of the court doesn't matter.

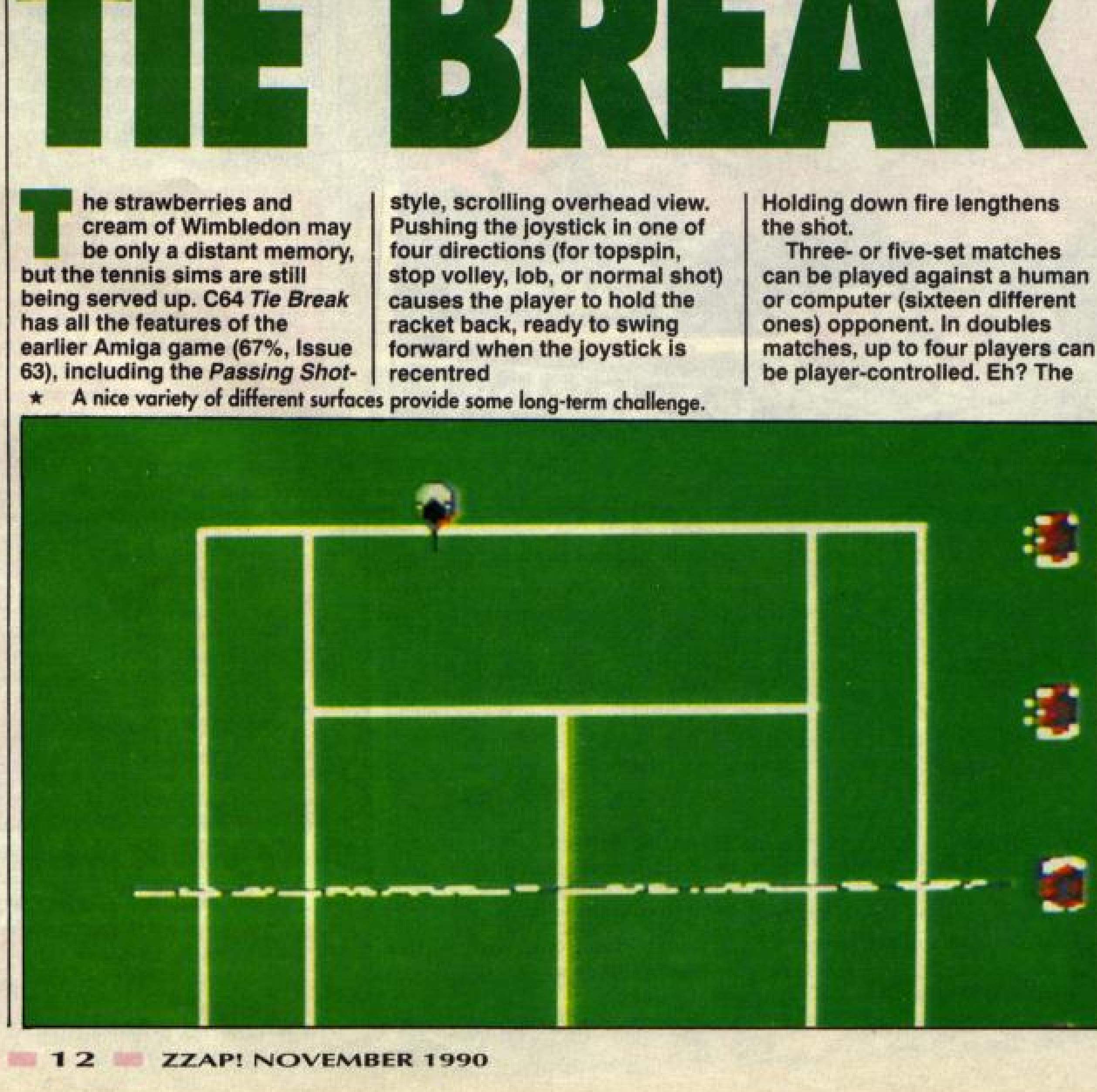
● Ocean, C64 £9.99 cassette, £14.99 disk

TIE BREAK

The strawberries and cream of Wimbledon may be only a distant memory, but the tennis sims are still being served up. C64 *Tie Break* has all the features of the earlier Amiga game (67%, Issue 63), including the *Passing Shot*-style, scrolling overhead view. Pushing the joystick in one of four directions (for topspin, stop volley, lob, or normal shot) causes the player to hold the racket back, ready to swing forward when the joystick is recentred Holding down fire lengthens the shot.

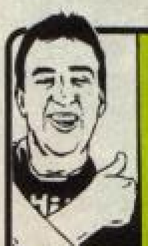
Three- or five-set matches can be played against a human or computer (sixteen different ones) opponent. In doubles matches, up to four players can be player-controlled. Eh? The C64's only got two joystick ports? No worries, Ocean are planning to sell a £5 adapter for two extra joysticks. As well as friendly matches you can compete in several international tournaments. You can even play a sort of league with the World Tournament option.

★ A nice variety of different surfaces provide some long-term challenge.





As with *International 3-D Tennis* the emphasis is firmly on playing the shots, timing your strokes to place the ball for that winning shot. This is hard enough to make so you're glad you don't have to actually move your player, and after a few games you soon get the hang of things. The overhead scroll works well generally, and doubles is good fun although the two computer players can maintain very long rallies ignoring human players altogether!



I enjoyed this much more than the earlier Amiga game. Due to a slower speed of play it's easier to time your shots and hence not as frustrating. That's not to say it's easy though — even the lowliest computer opponent is extremely hard to beat. Therefore it's more enjoyable playing against a more fallible human (ie Wozza). And though we haven't had a chance to try it out yet, the four-player doubles option sounds fun. With plenty of tournament options, *Tie Break* is yet another worthwhile tennis sim.

PRESENTATION 80%
'League' and tournament options plus four-player mode.

GRAPHICS 58%
The overhead view is more functional than impressive.

SOUND 51%
Okay title tune, minimal hitting FX.

HOOKABILITY 81%
Good fun, especially in the multi-player modes.

LASTABILITY 80%
16 tough computer opponents.

OVERALL 80%

Another fun tennis game.



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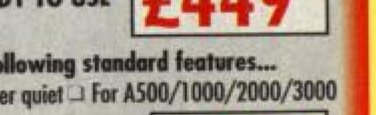
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ZZAP!TEST!

WINGS OF FURY

64 A

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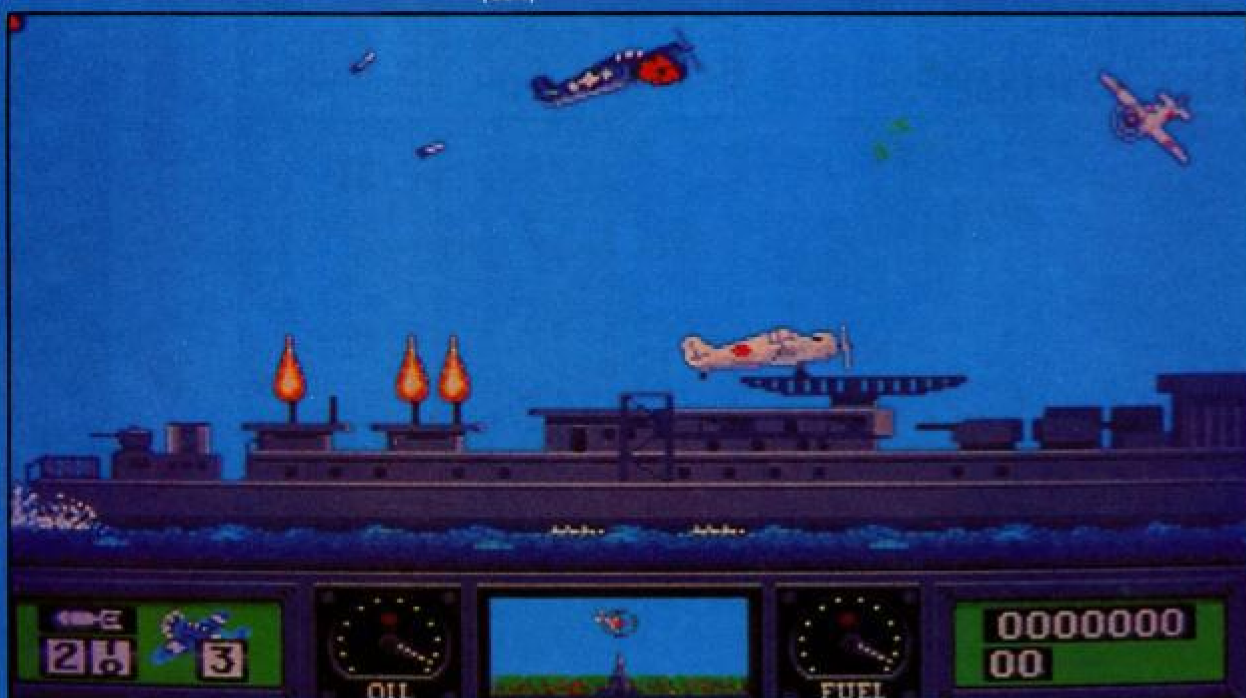
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Your carrier is heavily damaged with no Anti-Aircraft (AA) guns or spare pilots. Nevertheless steaming home will take it through lots of action. The game is divided into missions, where the objective

ROBIN

A great one this, well I would say that being a tad biased towards all things aerial but *Fury* really is fun. It all smacks of *Choplifter* with little men running around, except this time you're *allowed* to blast them! The torpedo runs are good and dogfighting with Zeros is enjoyable (pity I've never shot one down) but it's nothing compared with the thrills of bombing and strafing the Japs. Everyone who played it enjoyed the island attacks most, it's a shame Broderbund didn't make more of them. The plane itself is extremely good with a nice smoke effect when hit. *Fury* has the playability to make for a great full-price game but lacks variety for the Amiga. At a full ten pounds less, the C64 game is much better value with not too much disk accessing — although to be honest I'm not as keen on this version as everyone else here. The bombs are a little slow and the men are a bit poor — still the explosions are great and it's worth a look.

★ *Loderunner*-style enemies will be glad to know you've run out of bombs. (C64)



★ Your Gruman Hellcat can carry rockets, bombs or torpedoes.



is always the destruction of all nearby enemy forces. The first mission features an island base. You can use rockets or bombs to destroy the barracks and AA guns, forcing Japanese soldiers out into the open. If you don't kill them all, they'll take cover in the AA bunkers and start firing at you again. Everyone must be killed to complete the mission. To go onto the next stage, or simply to rearm, refuel and get repairs you need to land on your carrier.

Later missions can have three islands and several ships, including aircraft carriers. After every third mission you're promoted. To sink a ship you must first knock out its AA guns, then make a torpedo run. Of course, the enemy can make torpedo runs against your ship as well. A red arrow warns when an aircraft is attacking: you must either shoot the plane down or destroy the dropped torpedo. Five or six hits sink your carrier, along with any spare planes. There are also enemy fighters, which try to shoot you down.

The game view is the familiar side-on, horizontally scrolling one. However if you climb above a certain height, the scale drops dramatically, showing your plane as a handful of pixels soaring above an entire island. There's also a small 3-D view window in the control panel, especially useful when trying to land on the carrier.



While the gamestyle recalls an early Speccy game, the attention to detail and immense playability suggest a coin-op. The Hellcat is beautifully animated, there's an incredible amount of animation frames making for stunning aerial turns. Then there's the way the bombs tumble and how the rockets fall then ignite their motors. Playability matches visual detail: the control system is a little odd — pressing up causes a stall — but once mastered provides much more control and realism than you'd expect of an arcade game. Dogfighting is frustratingly hard, but ground combat is great, requiring practice to master the different weapons. Strafing is best with sand kicking up, enemy screams and a lethal tree always catching your wingtip. The only drawback is that as the game progresses there's more islands, AA guns and ships but nothing dramatically new. But despite being overpriced, there's a magical playability which makes it worth buying. C64 disk drive owners, in particular, should take a look at this nicely presented game. Although sound is limited compared to the Amiga's smart samples the plane actually moves faster and the slightly jerky scroll is more acceptable.

amiga

PRESENTATION 64%
Save function, save-to-disk high score table and seven skill levels.

GRAPHICS 74%
A few islands, ships and planes don't add up to a lot of variety. But there's some great detail, plus night flying.

SOUND 78%
Realistic engine noise, changing with speed, plus impressive weapons FX. Dull militaristic title tune.

HOOKABILITY 84%
It's not as easy as it looks, but the controls are soon mastered and addiction becomes complete.

LASTABILITY 74%
More variety would've been appreciated, but numerous skill levels, high difficulty and save option provide compensation.

OVERALL 78%

An extremely playable shoot-'em-up lacking only variety.

64

PRESENTATION 67%
Seven skills levels, some nice loading screens and save-to-disk high scores.

GRAPHICS 73%
The plane itself matches the Amiga's for animation, while explosions and weapons are good too. Men are disappointing, but otherwise good and faster than the Amiga.

SOUND 34%
There's an okay intro tune, but in-game FX are very basic.

HOOKABILITY 84%
As with the Amiga, the controls are soon mastered and blasting the baddies is very addictive.

LASTABILITY 77%
As with the Amiga more variety would've been appreciated, but it's cheaper and while there's no night flying nothing else seems to be missing.

OVERALL 79%

A great conversion with a superb main sprite.



● Ocean, Amiga £24.99

A

PANG

Pang is another of those surreal Japanese arcade games, this one involving bouncing balloons. One or two players work through single-screen levels, each containing a number of platforms: some destructible, others connected by ladders. To complete a level, one or more balloons must be destroyed using a vertically-firing energy beam. A balloon divides into two smaller ones when it's hit. The largest balloon divides three times before it's broken down into the destructible smallest balloons.

Marauding creatures can take away the ability to fire for a short time but some balloon explosions release collectable items: bonus points, extra time, a stopwatch which freezes everything, dynamite which divides all balloons into their smallest form, a grappling hook and a rapid-firing pistol.



Why are Ocean bothering to license obscure little coin-ops? Last issue, it was tile-spitting 'action' with a potato (*Plotting*) and now it's crusty old *Asteroids* with platforms, *Ghostbusters*-style beam weapons and 'sweet' Japanese sprites. Balloons can be surprisingly difficult to dodge, particularly the low-bouncing smallest ones, and when a number of them have been divided and sub-divided the screen becomes crowded and gameplay hectic. Tactics can be developed in the way beams and pick-ups are used and balloons tackled, but I found it all too frustrating and samey to play for long.



Like Wozza, I initially found *Pang* primitive. However, after a few two-player games I became totally hooked by the ridiculously simple concept. At first it's very confusing with balloons bouncing all over the place, but you soon discover ways to limit the number of small balloons and use the collectables to best effect — it's often unwise (suicidal) to use the dynamite! The presentation style is typically Japanese with cutesy animal sprites and jingly tunes, hardly making best use of the Amiga but a suitable enough accompaniment to the fun action.

VERSION UPDATE

C64 *Pang* will be cartridge-only and is apparently looking very nice indeed.

PRESENTATION 84%
One or two players, demo mode, choice of starting location, map screen and interlevel character portraits.

GRAPHICS 83%
Cute characters, neat bouncing balloons and some nice backdrops.

SOUND 76%
Jazzy title music, twee Japanese in-game tunes and good effects.

HOOKABILITY 90%
Balloon-bursting is a simply-grasped and addictive concept.

LASTABILITY 76%
Perhaps a tad repetitive in the long run.

OVERALL 82%

A polished conversion of a playable coin-op.

● Gremlin, C64 £9.99 cassette, £14.99 disk; Amiga £24.99

GREG NORMAN'S ULTIMATE GOLF

'The Great White Shark' (Norman's obligatory silly golfing nickname) has only recently been knocked off his number one spot by Nick Faldo — maybe he should practise a bit more on his own golfing sim! *Ultimate Golf* is also ideal for those armchair sports fans whose favourite hole is the nineteenth, but can't be bothered to walk round the first eighteen!

Up to four human or computer players can participate, in Strokeplay or Matchplay, with the option of playing Singles, Fourball, Foursome, or Greensome (the last three being various types of four-player, two-against-two games). The skill level of each computer player is determined by setting five factors: Experience, Stance, Grip, Swing, and Fitness. These can also be altered for human players to set handicap levels. Up to fifty created players can be stored in a database.

After leaving three of your 17 clubs behind (you're only allowed 14) it's out onto either of two in-built courses (or others from planned course disks). From the first tee you're greeted by a 3-D view, a grid of squares raised and sunk at different angles to form hills and bunkers. Additional hazards are posed by trees and water pools. As the flag is often hidden, a map allows you to view the whole hole — you can even walk to any spot and get a 3-D view from that position.

An info box indicates the distance to the pin, along with weather conditions and wind speed/direction. If you're playing with a caddy he'll automatically select the appropriate club. He'll also aim the shot, shown on the swing screen. Here, as well as fine-tuning the shot direction, you can select the amount of top or backspin, and sidespin (hook or slice).

When you're ready to play the shot, a power meter appears. A power bar rises, stopped by pressing fire. Then, before another falling bar reaches the bottom, you must press fire to stop a swaying direction needle in the middle for a straight shot, or on the marker indicating the amount of sidespin selected on the swing screen. Putting is achieved by aiming an on-screen cursor and selecting power.



★ The swing screen where the shot can be aimed, and various types of spin added. (Amiga)



Aargh! Golf games. Usually I'm doing really well, then make a 20 shot cock-up on the last hole to lose. Then when Phil takes 30 shots on a hole he tells me he's selected the Matchplay option so it doesn't matter how many shots are used, just who finishes a hole first. What a cheat! Still, there's no denying the masses of options in this latest golf game. Fanatics could take ages fine-tuning their shots, while dummies like me can just cross their fingers and hold down fire as long as possible. This makes it well worth a look: the sheer sophistication elevates it above any other golf game I can think of and is especially impressive on the C64.



The ultimate golf sim? Not quite. It does boast quite a few novel features such as the two-against-two player options, the helpful map, and an elaborate method of playing shots which allows you to put all sorts of spin on the ball. I also appreciated the way that you can set computer players' five ability ratings and your own handicap.

However, the real problem lies with the 3-D display. Although it looks very good (apart from a few brown 'bare' patches on the C64), the view is stupidly redrawn every time you select any of the option screens — even for the little info box. This is especially annoying on the C64 as the landscape takes a few seconds to build up. Ironically the delay is a deterrent to using the game's sophisticated options. The much speedier Amiga game is less frustrating but, apart from a not very useful map zoom option, has no extra features.

64

PRESENTATION 78%
Plenty of options, neat screen layout, short multiload for each hole.

GRAPHICS 76%
The 3-D grid landscape works fairly well.

SOUND 45%
Mediocre title tune, minimal FX.

HOOKABILITY 79%
Easy to pick up, marred only by unnecessary redrawing of landscape.

LASTABILITY 70%
Only two courses, but varying skill/handicap levels and game types.

OVERALL 75%
A sophisticated, playable golf sim.

amiga

PRESENTATION 76%
Loads of options.

GRAPHICS 79%
Good 3-D, okay golfer animation.

SOUND 40%
Mediocre title tune, minimal FX.

HOOKABILITY 78%
The sophisticated shot selection system is easy to use.

LASTABILITY 68%
Only two courses, but extensive options add variety.

OVERALL 76%
An enjoyable game of golf.

★ Greg Norman drives down the fairway on the C64.



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ZZAP! RRAP!



RRAP

IT'S A WIZ!

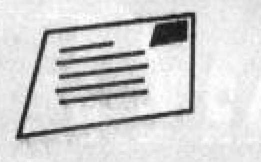
Dear Lloyd
On your review on *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* (Issue 64) you said in the C64 version Arthur could turn in mid jump — he can't, at least not in my version!

Anyway, before you printed a cheat mode for Thalamus's *Armalyte*. Could you please print it again for the benefit of me (Wiz) and my friend Jaz. I also want you to answer some questions for me.

1. Why can I not get hold of *Skate Or Die* for C64?
2. Is there a cheat for *Rainbow Islands* and what overall did it get?
3. Who is the prat that stole my name in last issue's Scorelord. Who is this Brenden Wyse?
4. I have got a total score of 11,906,120 on *Rainbow Islands*, Ha! Beat that Brenden!
5. The Maniacs Of Noise are better than Sir Hubbard I think!
6. I am writing this letter from a lunatic asylum.
7. Is the Scorelord really RoboCop?
8. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Thalamus on their first decent Amiga game, *Venom Wing*.
9. Why have you not reviewed *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* as it is now available on Amiga.
Yours hopingly that you will print this if you don't I will:
a. Keep writing and hope
b. Tell everyone your magazine is not as good as C+VG (not true)
c. Come and plant a bomb in Robin
d. or I will set Batman on him!
But thank you any way
A LCP 'Wiz', Wigan, Lancs
PS. I have enclosed a present for you.

●***Thanks for the 10p, I used it to buy Ed a cup of tea. As I didn't need your homemade bomb to escape with, I used it on the noisy advertising dept — unfortunately it wasn't powerful enough and they survived! But at least the whistle is useful for breaking up their appalling singing. Their rendition of the Grease soundtrack has to be heard to be believed. Now for your questions:***
1. ***I don't know, but Woz will sell you his copy for a tenner.***
2. ***No. It originally got 92% on C64 and Amiga, but now we feel it was probably underrated and deserved a Gold Medal.***
7. ***No, he can't stand baby food.***
9. ***That version is only available on import (on Amiga and C64), but we'll try to get hold of a review copy. Mirrorsoft are also doing a Turtles game, to be released before Xmas.***
LM

★ Free at last! Yes, last month the fully recovered Ed Stu gave the Scorelord a holiday (in Iraq — he fancied meeting a fellow ruthless dictator and also wanted to taste some chemical weapons). In the meantime Stu regained control of Stalag ZZAP!, to be known from now on as The ZZAP! Mill. Unfortunately, the Scorelord was freed with the women and children — the Iraqis couldn't tell what sex he was! Never mind, Stu promised that as long as he behaved he could have as much bleach as he wanted — enough even to clean Saddam Hussein's trousers when our lads invade!



MONEY MIX-UP

Dear Lloyd
I read with interest your magazine and decided to take up your offer Export Megatape 6 — one pound ninety-nine didn't seem excessive for airmail (the conversion I presumed to be around four dollars).

So, on August 8th I presented myself at our bank and asked for a bank draft for one pound ninety-nine.

The exchange rate on that day meant that it cost me four dollars seventy-five. The draft itself cost seven dollars. And to post it all cost one dollar ten — a total of twelve dollars eighty-five (around six pound I guess!!).

On August 16th I had a letter from the bank advising me that they had inadvertently made the draft out for four pounds seventy-five. So I dutifully went down to the bank to sort it all out. It turns out that there is little to be done at this stage until either the bank's international department sorts it out, or you forward us a refund for the excess (which of course goes back to the bank).

One has to see the humour in the situation and I just wanted to let you know that I am eagerly awaiting the arrival of my FREE tape — with my luck it won't load!!!
Trevor Brewis, Australia.

●***Sorry to hear about your troubles, Trev. I've handed your letter onto our Mail Order department, so everything should soon be sorted out. As I said a couple of issues ago, the best way for overseas readers to pay for stuff is by Mastercard or Visa. That way you can pay in sterling without entailing the cost of a banker's draft. Also, from now on the megatapes should be on export copies of ZZAP!***
LM

BE GENTLE WITH ME!

Hi Lloyd
I'm a first time writer so I'm a bit nervous.
1. Firstly I'd like to say I thought ZZAP!'s job as a Games Magazine was to help the readers decide which games were worth buying and which were best avoided. If I'm correct with this assumption I'm disappointed that you feel it necessary to leave (especially Amiga) games out from getting reviews if they are very poor. We poor people who can't afford more than one mag ad buy games may see a good looking game, pay £20-25, get it home and find out it's a turkey — all because you failed to review it. Amiga owners have as much right to review space as 64 owners, especially as we'd be wasting twice as much money.

We can't assume if a game hasn't been reviewed when a game is in the shops or reviewed at all it is poor because sometimes you are not sent games or more common are very late with reviews, eg *Man Utd* (and that's not bad).
2. How about an Amiga 'Budget' section: there are plenty of £4.99 games about.
3. I agree with other Amiga owners, give us a cover disk.
4. Get up to date and give us a regular PD section complete with reviews or comments.
5. Finally why not have the official charts next to the readers charts for a comparison on how hype sells a game, eg *Chase HQ* sold very well but was only average.
M.H, Washington, Tyne & Wear

●**1.** ***We try to cram in as many reviews each month as we can, but we sometimes run out of space. Nevertheless we usually try to include those cut reviews in the next issue. In the case of Man Utd we originally didn't have space for the Amiga review, and somehow it was forgotten until the C64 version came in. Apologies to all United fans.***
2. ***We do now include Amiga games in the budget section.***
3. ***I'm afraid it's not my decision.***
4. ***Robin is already planning a demo section.***
5. ***'Official' charts cost***

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money (aaargh!) and anyway, we feel ours are a better representation of what people are actually playing.
LM

ZZAP!, YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS!

Dear Lloyd
Where have all the wacky letters about bananas and fish gone? Do you refuse to print them or are none being sent in?

I am a little worried that ZZAP! maybe getting a little too serious. Phil `footy' King is the best thing since the great Gazza Penn however, but I still feel ZZAP! is not as weird and wonderfully comical as the days when fatty Houghton and Kati Hamza ruled the roost, (and Maff).

You're still doing a great job but don't waste Rrap space with readers own game percentages. We all know it's a personal thing so sod all the `why did such and such a game get 95%, it's crap' type letters. They're not worth the effort and are dead boring. Come on you readers let's have some witty original ideas for the Rrap and liven it up a bit.

Right then I'll leave you with the following words.
Wall's Vienetta and a jock strap (wahay!!!)
Yours scrumpingly
Craig Jackson, Tamworth, B78 3NN
PS. I have every issue of ZZAP!, right from number 1 and my Ma had a letter printed in ish 12.

●I'm sorry but the yellow, bendy fruit has lost much of its humorous appeal. People no longer laugh at bananas as they walk down the street. I feel here that through humour the readers of ZZAP! have thankfully destroyed one of the world's most distressing prejudices: bananaism. Now, at last, thanks to you, bananas can be taken seriously, get jobs (other than being eaten), send their children to school without fear of taunts, and live perfectly normal, happy lives.
LM

THE UNSEEN DANGERS OF APPLE CRUMBLE

Yo Lloyd me ol' Blue Smartie it is I Mr Smartie or Mrs to my friends.

I am speaking from Happy Valley infirmary for I have been, as well as others, contaminated by a strange lifeform.

It all happened when the new cook arrived (after our old one went on a long vacation) and decided to make some of her apple crumble, but we weren't to know that she was a nutter herself.

But it's too late for poor Fred, he's turned into a gruelling vegetable and will be incinerated in 10 minutes, oh well that's life!

Anyhow my pals Bert and Mad dog would like to ask some questions
Mad dog: Woof.
Bert: Gurgle, slur, gurgle.
Question time:
1. I am quite impressed by the Commodore C64GS Console. I feel that an article or feature could be done on our little brother as I think many other readers would find it interesting.
2. What are your thoughts upon things like the Home Computer Club.
3. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the interview with Probe about *Golden Axe*, if I was more excited I'd wet my nappy. Keep up the interviews.
4. The Cover tapes are well 'ard, it's good to see the oldies again (don't know about *Dominion* though).
5. I thought you said in Issue 64 that Ollie Frey would not be drawing the cover art on ZZAP! any more but when I look at Issue 65 his name is on the front. Long live Ollie.
6. And finally I couldn't be more pleased with a magazine such as yours.
Oh well must rush to get a good front seat at the incineration room. Toodleloo.
Edd (woo hoo) Bullock, Happy Valley Home for rest and perhaps sanity.

1. *There was one last issue.*
2. *They're alright. The introductory offers are often tempting, but remember you usually have to buy a certain number of items in the first year.*
5. *Oli likes to keep his hand in so he'll still be doing the odd ZZAP! cover.*
LM

FAB FERRARI

Dear Lloyd
I would like to raise many points about virtually everything I can think of.

First of all congratulations on your *Ferrari Formula One* review. I bought the game and I love it. One query though is that its lastability should go up to 99%. Marcus Geavey obviously is a div saying that it is rubbishy. It is my favourite game. Many people will find it hard at first but when you get the hang of it it's great. Marcus Geavey also thought *Pitstop II* was junk, that isn't true either. It may be a little dated but great fun with 2 players and it is very fast moving. He was right about *Powerdrift* which was overrated but you have said why so I'll press on.

Robin always complains about not having time to check all the incoming tips. There are two solutions to his dilemma. He must either hire someone to check all the tips or put a little star or something next to the tips he does check to let people know which tips will definitely work.

Point number 3 concerns the Rrap. I don't think your replies to letters recently have been very good. Example in Issue 62 Steve Williams wrote a very long and good letter. Your reply was short, pathetic and irrelevant really to the letter. It might raise a laugh or two for some people but your reply was worth 0 out of 10.

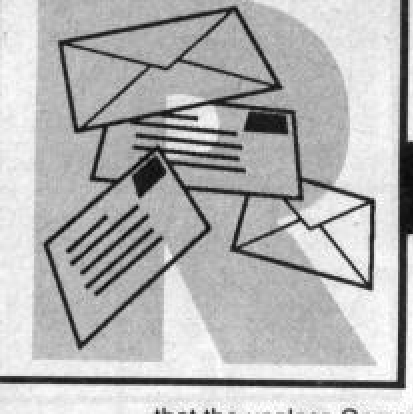
In some Rraps you have far too much stupid letters. I am not against the humour but instead of some of the humour print more serious letters which make you think a bit.

My next point is that with there being less software for the 64 doesn't make life bad for every 64 owner. In let's say a month a 64 games buyer may buy between 0 and 3 full price games. It doesn't matter that not as many games are being produced because the games that are appearing are mainly good. All that's happened is

JUST A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS?

Dear Lloyd
I am fully dedicated reader of ZZAP! from Issue 55 to 65, I own an Amiga and find ZZAP! brilliant. I have just a couple of questions on various points:
1. When I flicked through Issue 65 I noticed that all the games in the budget section were lower than 60%, you are meant to show us some bad games but what about the good ones?
2. What happened to The Geek?
3. Please print a cover disk for Amiga owners!!!
4. Get Rob to do more in the arcades
5. Should I buy *Time Machine* for my Amiga?
6. Previews, Reviews, Creature Feature and ZZAP! Rrap are brilliant and nothing can be done to improve them.
7. Please print this letter, if you don't I will.
Well that's all folks, enjoy imprisonment in stalag towers.
John Horan, Blackrock Ireland.
PS. Rob killed Stu because Phil was playing *Kick Off* and the Scorelord was at home watching a film called `The Lobster Man From Mars' (a good friend of his). Robin says he was out on a date (who'd go out with him!!!).

●Apparently a girl called Blodwyn regularly takes her guide dog for walks with Robin! Anyway, Stu wasn't killed, well only his brain and that didn't really make much difference!
1. *There simply weren't any good budget releases that month.*
2. *After bumping off his creator, Norman Nutz, he literally fell apart at the seams.*
3. *Ask the Editorial Director (but don't tell him I told you to!).*
4. *He says he'll do some very soon — just as soon as he gets his hands on some more petty cash!*
5. *It's an excellent game, though a mite frustrating: the other day Phil was juggling three sets of time zones when the phone rang, by the time he returned (just a few seconds later) he was back to square one!*
6. *High praise indeed!*
LM





ZZAP! RRAP!

that the useless Computer Companies have left and stopped producing 64 games because they were failures, eg Grandslam. I bought *Peter Beardsley's International Football* from them. That game has long since been terminated. Notice that all the top companies still make games for the 64.
Congratulations are in order for System 3, Thalamus, US Gold, Ocean, Rainbow Arts, Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft and many others such as Imageworks.

Point 5. The current reviewing team are great even though one is Welsh, one is the Scorelord and the other is stupid. If one wants to leave, chain him up and force him to stay.

Point 6. Stop using the F word or any other bad words in ZZAP!. It isn't funny and is no better than the advertising way back in Issue 40 for *Barbarian 2* and *Psycho Pigs UXB*. You said that the advertising was tasteless and so did many others so why don't you ban the F words?

Point 7. here are my top 10 games of all time.
1. Ferrari Formula 1
2. MicroProse Soccer
3. Last Ninja 2
4. Stunt Car Racer
5. Ikari Warriors
6. Project Stealth Fighter
7. Turrican
8. Silkworm
9. IK+
10. Combat School

Point 8. Message to Amiga owners number 1. This magazine will not be ruled by Amiga. The 64 was here first. There are plenty of other mags if you want Amiga coverage. I am not against Amiga coverage but I don't like them Amiga owners saying get lost to the 64. The graphics on *Turrican* (64 wise) could rival some Amiga games for great graphics and playability. Also the sound on the *Turrican* title screen is a remix of some of the 'Transformers The Movie' music.

Point 9. Message number 2 for the Amiga owners — GO AWAY AND DIE VERY PAINFULLY.

Very last point — Honest! ZZAP! at the moment is very good on reviewing, previews and entertainment. Don't let these standards slip back to the days of Maff, Gordo and Kati.
Congratulations on your improvement!!!
From one very exhausted
Simon Burke, Hatfield AL10 9DQ.
PS. *Forgotten Worlds* is uuggh. What morons could like that?

●What's all this about using the F word? I don't think I've ever used it, but if you're of a sensitive nature I suggest not reading this month's Wings review: those German planes have some pretty awful-sounding names!

As for stupid letters, some people want more of them, and some can't help writing them.
LM

ASK ME ANOTHER

Dear Lloyd
I thought I'd write in to this brill mag of yours because I want a few questions answered! (Please, creep, creep)
1. How much would a Microdeal dual joystick adaptor cost? ie — A lot of people might want one of these adaptors to play such games as *Kick Off 2*, *Gauntlet 2* and *Leatherneck*!
2. When is the next ZZAP! Challenge, because I enjoy these, the best one was the *Kick Off* challenge!
3. Isn't *Kick Off 2* brilliant? — I can win the World Cup (na na na).
4. Is there any news on the 'IGEC' chair by Mr Takemika.
5. Can I still buy a 'Powerplay Cruiser' joystick from the Zzuperstore?
6. Where are Rockford and the Panto Horse? — I loved them.
7. *Manchester United* the game is rubbish, a bit like the team, plus you haven't received it yet!
8. I agree with the Linda Lusardi Lookalike, Derek, that Phil King looks incredibly like Bruce Grobbelaar!
9. Are Anco going to release any more footy games?
10. Please, please, please print this letter 'cos it's so good (ho! ho! what a laugh).
By the way are you the same Lloyd that's on the TV, on such famous shows such as 'Masterchef' and 'Through The Keyhole' (only joking)?
James Anderson, Leighton Buzzard LU7 8XG.
PS. Hello to everyone I know!

●1. It costs about £6 from most software dealers.
2. When Robin's got the guts to take someone on!
3. Yes, you flipping show-off.
4. Yes, amazingly, the news is that it was all an April Fool joke. Well I never!
5. Yes.
6. They've gone to visit Arnie Schwarzenegger on Mars.
7. What do you mean, we haven't received it? It was reviewed in Issue 65.
8. Yes, Phil says he now wants to play for England.
9. Apparently Steve Screech (yes, he is a real person!) of Anco is working on Boot Boyz — we don't know much about it yet, though.
LM

BRUCIE BANTER

Dear Lloyd
1. In ZZAP! No. 64 someone said Phil looked like Bruce Grobbelaar, and this could be why he's so good at *Kick Off*. Bruce is fairly good at *Kick Off*, is he the Bruce Grobbelaar of the computer world?
2. Here's another thing, do me a favour ol' chum: ask System 3 if they would print you a chart showing when their new games come out like *Last Ninja 3*.
3. Which ZZAP! has a *Last Ninja 1* map for levels 5 and 6.
4. Which football game is the best on the market?
5. Will *Giana Sisters* be released on budget or a *Mario Brothers* game?
6. Does Phil like *Italy 1990* by US Gold?
7. What about putting some skill games on your mega tape not crazy shoot-'em-ups. *Mutants* and *Sanxion* were good.
8. What about a ZZAP! game on the Megatape like you must get Phil to collect *Kick Off* from the shops without Robin taking it from him on the way back, or Robin must herd all the sheep in the fields around the ZZAP! headquarters.
Well that's about it from me in ol' Geordie land. Still, can't waste time. Thanks for reading, BYE!
D Donohoe, Ashington NE63 8DX.

●1. I never knew Bruce played **Kick Off*****. Perhaps he'll give Phil a game one day.***
2. I'm afraid ZZAP! doesn't believe in such superstitious nonsense as release schedules!
3. It's Issue 29.
4. On the Amiga, **Kick Off 2*****; on the C64, either*** **MicroProse Soccer, Emlyn Hughes International Soccer,** ***or*** **Kick Off 2** ***(very decisive of him! — Ed).***
5. **Giana Sisters** ***will never be released (at least not in the UK). The original*** **Mario Brothers** ***by Ocean wasn't very good — I'm not sure whether it ever came out on budget. Grandslam (who've recently gone bust) did release the Mario-style*** **Terry's Big Adventure** ***— maybe some budget house will pick it up. Ubi Soft are also releasing*** **Twin World** ***on the C64.***
6. Yes, but not as much as **Kick Off 2*****!***
7. We're aiming to put a wide variety of games on the Megatapes.
8. Robin reckoned he was going to do a ZZAP! **SEUCK** ***game, but he's been too busy (with Blodwyn).***
LM

NIKKI NICKED?

Dear Lloyd
I am quite puzzled! In the C64 *Turrican* review Stu quoted Rainbow Arts's Nikki Hemming. 'Nikki Hemming,' I hear you say! Isn't she the glamorous bird who worked for Arc (Atari) as mentioned in February's The Word? Who does she belong to (!!!?) Rainbow Arts or Atari, or is she a transvestite?
Yours worriedly (?)
Harvey King, Hayes UB3 1TP.
PS. Isn't she beautiful (!!) slobber!

●It's a bit complicated, after all Nikki is in great demand. She actually works for a company called IDG Europe which does PR for Rainbow Arts and used to do the same for Arc.
LM

★ Well, that's about it for another month. Next issue, we'll be celebrating Christmas — doesn't time fly? — so send those cards in early to *Newsfield, Lloyd 'I'm Free' Mangram, The ZZAP! Mill, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW*. And I'm sure we'll get the usual quota of crackers! See ya.

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For future compilation mega-stardom look no further than the budget selection for a trio of top-notch hits such as *Tilt, Kamikaze* and *Kwik Snax*. It all means CodeMasters are bound for ever more success in selling to us computer gamers.

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THE MAGNIFICENT ZZAP! MEGATAPE 11 INSTRUCTIONS!

RIMRUNNER
● (Palace)

On the very edge of known Space, far from the systems of Man, the Insectoid race travel between the stars, colonising uninhabited and long dead planets, despite constant attack from the hostile Arachnoids.

To protect their colonies the Insectoids use force shields designed to repel any large metallic objects — such as Arachnoid stormtroopers.

To maintain these protective bubbles at full power the force shield generators use vast quantities of energy and need regular recharging.

To meet this need an elite group of Insectoid warriors was created. Using reptilian mounts, known as Runners, bred for speed and endurance, the warriors patrol the colony perimeter, recharging the generators and destroying any hostile lifeforms or Arachnoid probes that may have penetrated the shield.

Thus was born the legend of the RIMRUNNER.

GAMEPLAY
You must maintain the force shield generators for the allotted time period. You will then be reassigned to a new colony.

Each colony is equipped with four spare Runners which will be sent out as they are needed.

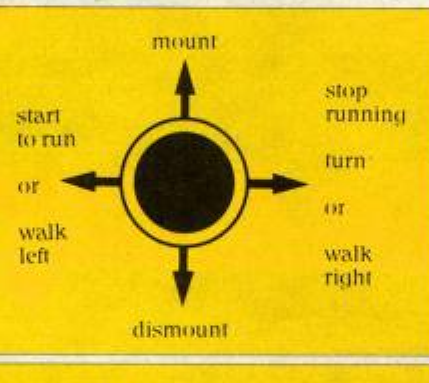
Any generators that require recharging will flash red on the locater. You are not able to recharge a generator while riding, only while on foot.

CREDITS

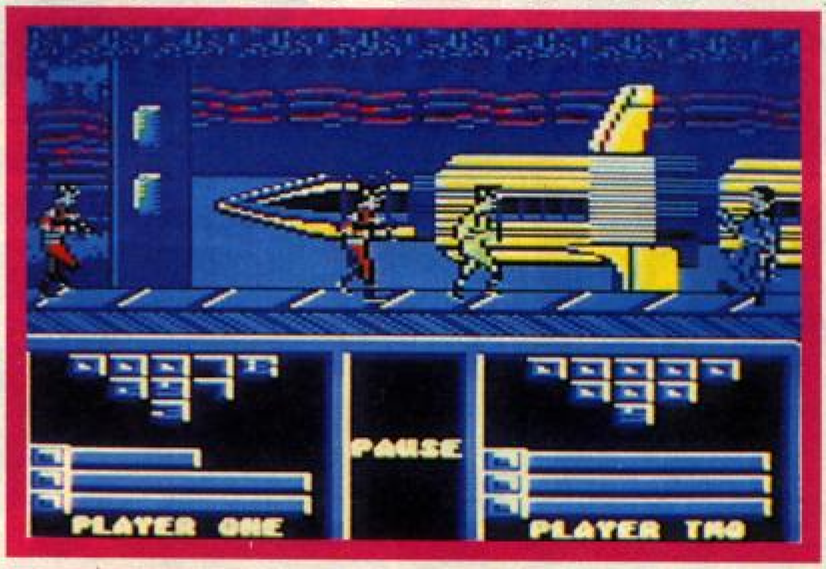


CONTROLS
For a left-facing Insectoid/Runner (reverse these instructions when facing right)





FIRE = start or restart   P = pause   Q = quit



THUNDERFORCE
● (Hewson)

SCENARIO
In the year 2187, a criminal group has taken you and your partner as prisoners in a very deep and cold dungeon. This dungeon is very well defended and it is very difficult to escape alive.

The guards are very humane in the beginning but as they see that you are still trying to escape they start using more powerful weapons to stop you. They call robots, aliens and sledges to help them stop you. As the game proceeds the attackers are getting more and more nervous about your escape and they are trying harder and harder to stop you. If you escape from the caves, the criminals have lost a very important hostage.

You have been captured because you have some top secret information about the underground chemical factories the bandits are running. Try to avoid the deadly sledges, the aliens, the bullets and the security guards and reach the end of the long and hard escape before your time runs out.

CONTROLS
Player one joystick in port one.
Player two joystick in port two.
Joystick left — move left.
Joystick right — move right.
Joystick up — jump.
Joystick down — duck.
Fire — use your fists or releases your gun and activates the shield if chosen.

PLAYING THE GAME
At the beginning of each level the only weapon you have is your fists, but later on you will find:

1. A gun — this destroys men, aliens and sledges.
2. A shield — this weapon destroys everything close to you.
3. Stones — this weapon destroys all it meets on its way.
4. A ball — the ball is able to destroy all it meets on its way except the boomerang.
5. The boomerang — eliminates all enemies including the aliens.

After releasing weapons 3, 4 and 5, duck for shooting the sledges.

CREDITS


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ZORK
● (Infocom/Activision)

Many strange tales have been told of the fabulous treasure, exotic creatures and diabolical puzzles in the Great Underground Empire. As an aspiring adventurer, you will undoubtedly want to locate these treasures and deposit them in your trophy case. You'd better equip yourself with a source of light (for the caverns are dark) and weapons (for some of the inhabitants are unfriendly — especially the thief, a skilled pickpocket and ruthless opponent).

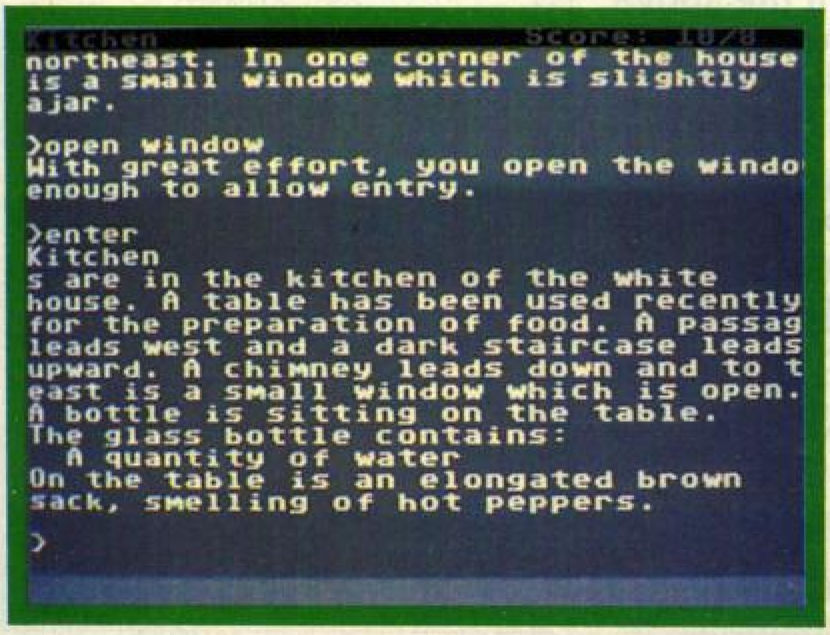
GETTING STARTED
Here are a few inputs for you to try at the first several prompts. After typing each input, don't forget to press RETURN:
>LOOK AT THE MAILBOX
>OPEN THE MAILBOX
>INVENTORY
>LOOK AT THE HOUSE

To move from place to place, type the compass direction you want to go. When you begin playing, it's a good idea to become familiar with your surroundings by exploring every location and reading each description carefully. As you explore the Empire it is helpful to make a map of the geography.

SPECIAL COMMANDS
There are number of one-word commands which you can type instead of a sentence:
AGAIN — Repeats your previous sentence. You can abbreviate AGAIN to G.
BRIEF — This gives you the full description of a location only the first time you to enter it. On subsequent visits you are only told the name of location and objects present. This is the default setting, changed by using the VERBOSE or SUPERBRIEF commands.
DIAGNOSE — Gives a medical report of your physical condition. This is particularly useful if you have just survived a dangerous battle or if you are under the effects of a magical spell.
INVENTORY — Lists what you're carrying.
LOOK — Describes your location in full detail. Abbreviated to L.
OOPS — If you accidentally mistype a word, you can correct it on the next line by typing OOPS and the correct word. For example: you type GET SORWD and are told, 'I don't know the word "sorwd".' You could then type OOPS SWORD.

SAVING AND RESTORING
It will probably take you many days to complete *Zork*. Using the SAVE command, you can store the game position on a blank cassette.

CREDITS



SWIV DEMO
● (The Sales Curve/Storm)

Not the sequel to the sizzling *Silkworm*, merely inspired by that superb coin-op conversion, *Swiv* nevertheless seems destined for mega-success as one of the best blast-'em-ups of the year. Random Access, the programmers of *Ninja Warriors* and *Silkworm*, have dropped a familiar helicopter and jeep team into a vertically-scrolling combat zone. In the finished game you can choose which vehicle to control, or have simultaneous two-player action. Giant multi-part copters, super tanks and weird birdlike creatures are all being programmed into the varied four levels. See previews for more pics!

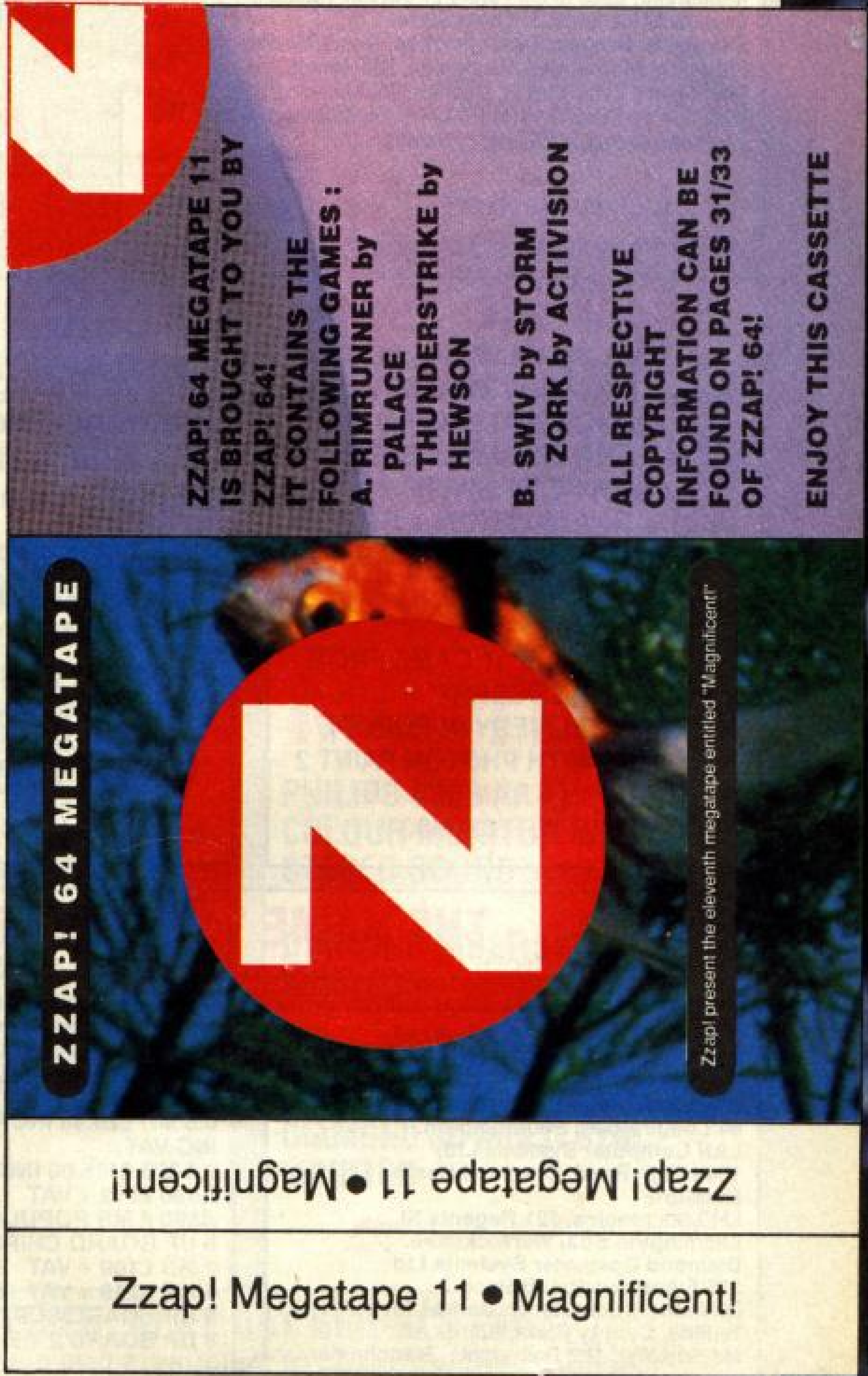


OFFICIAL SWIV INSTRUCTIONS
Just put a joystick in port 2 and blast everything in sight. Well you'll have to think your way through some sections and some nasties get even nastier if you shoot them, but you get the picture!

CREDITS

ZZAP! MEGATAPE 11 © 1990.

If your amazing ZZAP! Megatape proves to be faulty, have no fear. Just bung it in a jiffy bag and send it to Newsfield, The ZZAP! Tape Clinic, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.



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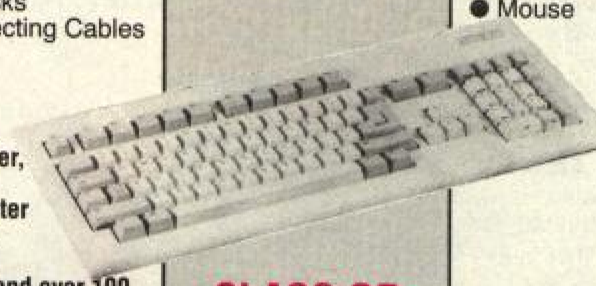
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CALIFORNIA GAMES

● Kixx, £2.99 (Rerelease)

Yo! Dig out your most fluorescent T-shirt, put on your flashiest Bermuda shorts (could be chilly this time of year but ne'er mind) and wrap a pair of shades around your peepers! It's time for the hippest, most radical of all the Epyx *Games*, where up to eight players can compete in six cool West Coast events.

First up it's Half Pipe for the kick turns, hand plants and aerials of freestyle skateboarding, then Footbag, where the strange little bean bag has to be kept in the air as long as possible, mostly with the feet but also the odd header or two. Put some Beach Boys on the stereo to get in the mood for Surfing (USA) and, if you've performed enough spins without getting your feet wet, put on your Walkman for a Roller Skate Race and dodge along the sea front. Speed and somersaults are the key to BMX Racing, then to the local park for some Frisbee catching.





It's a surprise that this has only just been released on budget; it's pretty long in the tooth now and has appeared on several compilations. It was originally reviewed way back in Issue 29, the days when anything produced by Epyx and with `*Games*' in the title was instantly given 97% and a three-page Gold Medal review. Ciarán Brennan thought it `an amazing package... the only problem is trying to decide which event to take part in first.' And Jazza Rignall raved, `*California Games* is quite simply the apex of computer sports gaming.'

As ever for the Epyx *Games* series, presentation is high, with more play options than you can shake several sticks at, although cassette loading is rather long winded. There's variation from event to event but most graphics are beautifully drawn and animated. Playability is highest on surfing, after that it's a close contest between half pipe, frisbee and BMX. Individually, none of the events will keep you playing long but as a package, and especially when playing against friends, *California Games* is great value.

OVERALL 82%

QUEDEX

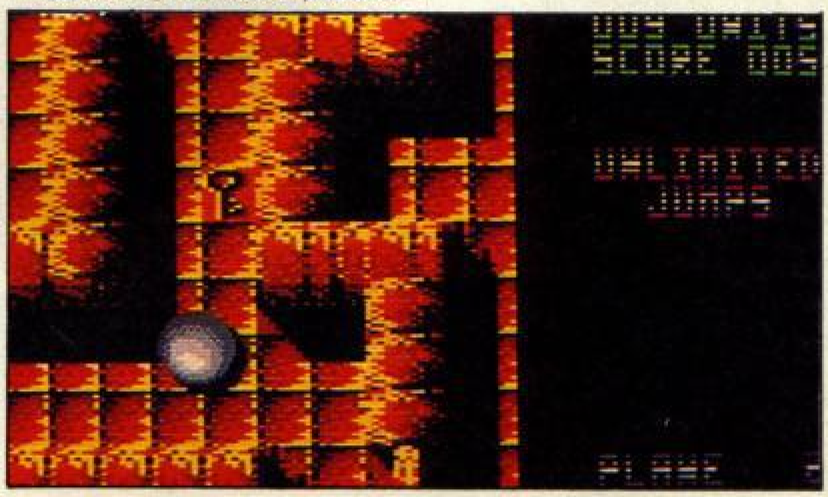
● Kixx, £2.99 (Rerelease)

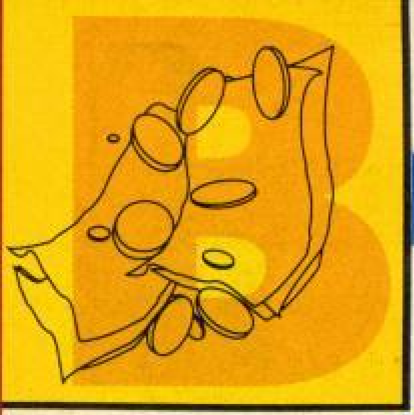
Stavros Fasoulas's `quest for ultimate dexterity' involves guiding a rotating metal ball (though it looks like a disc) through ten puzzling planes to reach the end `goal' within the time limit. Some of these are scrolling mazes with teleports and doors to unlock, while others require you to jump around collecting things and avoiding hazards. The ten, which can be attempted in any order, are:

1. Five small sub-planes to practise basic skills.
2. A scrolling maze with teleports and keys.
3. Four hidden amulets must be found.
4. A downhill race. Hitting obstacles drains the time limit.
5. Go over all the floor tiles to make them the same colour.
6. Get sucked through pipes and avoid deadly skulls.
7. Collect extra time units without touching the surrounding goal.
8. Areas of this maze swiftly disappear: collect the four keys to get to the central goal.
9. Collect crosses which allow you to destroy al the obstacle blocks.
10. A series of stepping stones at different heights: take the correct route, jumping from one to another.

If it all sounds a bit dull, that's because it is. We reckon *Quedex* was well overrated back in Issue 31 (92%). Okay, so you get ten pretty different levels for your money, but none of them are much fun, while most are frustratingly difficult — if you make one tiny mistake on plane 8, you've had it! Wozza was a bit peeved after originally paying a tenner for the game. `It's boring with lax playability, and a great disappointment from Fasoulas.'

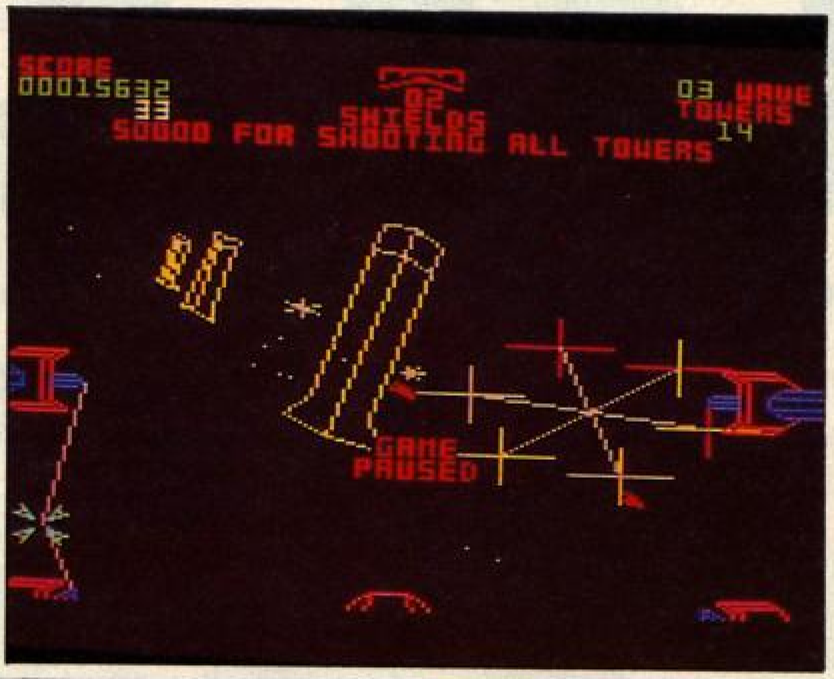
OVERALL 56%





BUDGET!

STAR WARS
● The Hit Squad, £2.99 (Rerelease)



First released for Christmas '89 this was also part of the *Star Wars Trilogy* compilation released last Christmas. In this conversion of the classic Atari coin-op you take the role of Luke Skywalker, piloting his X-wing in a bid to destroy Darth Vader's Death Star.

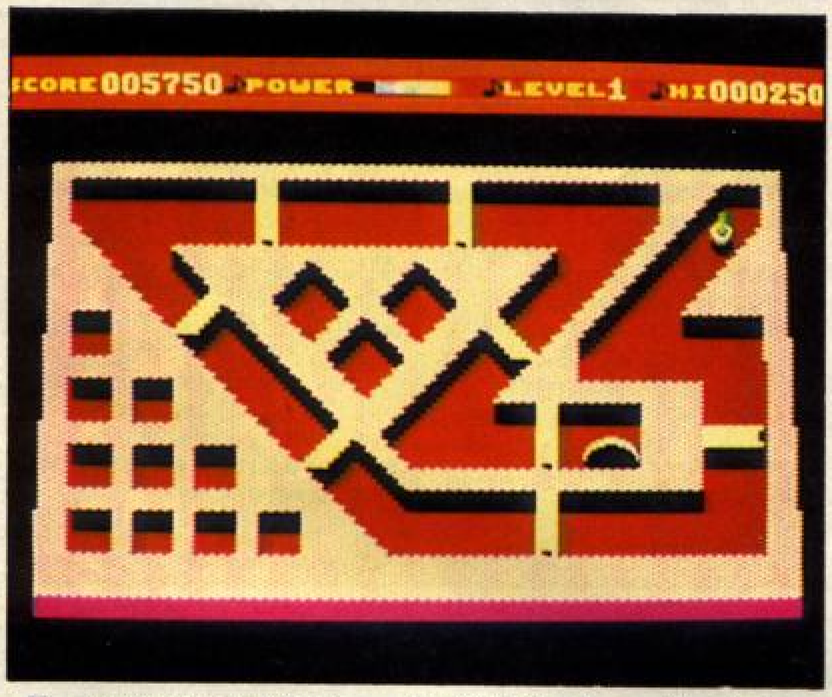
The mission consists of three stages, all portrayed by 3-D, wireframe graphics. First, there's a dogfight with Empire Tie-fighters. Blast them, and their fireballs, with your lasers. If a fireball hits you, you lose one of nine units of energy. The second stage takes place on the Death Star's surface with you shooting laser turrets and towers. Finally, there's the famous trench scene. Here Luke must dodge barriers and fireballs to reach the exhaust port — this must be shot to destroy the Death Star. Then it's back to the start to do it all over again, but this time it'll be slightly harder.

First reviewed in Issue 33 (earning 70%), *Star Wars* was something of a disappointment to fans of the coin-op, mainly due to the large, jerky frame update — an attempt to increase the speed of the vector graphics. Steve Jarratt commented, 'the TIE-fighters go through their aerial ballet as if in a strobe light.' Julian Rignall also criticised the directional control method and would have preferred pilot controls like those of the coin-op.

Technically, the game now looks very dated — even with the large frame update the graphics are still fairly slow, especially when there's a lot happening on screen. And with only three stages the simple blast-'em-all action gets a bit repetitive, though it makes for a good high score game.

OVERALL 68%

TILT
● Code Masters, £2.99



A simple concept it may be but this is one of those games which will soon have you tearing your hair out. The idea is to tilt a maze so that your ball rolls through it without hitting the walls. Things are made more complicated by the sliding gates: although these can be opened by pressing fire, they close immediately so good timing is crucial.

If you manage to get to the hole at the end of the maze, you're transported to the next, even more tortuous maze. Hitting either walls or gates sends you back to the starting point, minus a bit of energy — when this runs out you're dead. Complete all four mazes and you return to the first, but this time it's made harder by the addition of flashing energy barriers — pass over them when they're off. On later levels the size of the ball is increased, making things even trickier.

That's about all there is to the game, but it's surprisingly addictive. Frustration is lessened by the fact that even if you fail to get to end of the maze, any gates which you got through disappear for the next attempt. Though a bit limited in scope, *Tilt* is quite an original and playable little game. It's also technically very impressive for a budget game, with the solid 3-D maze moving quickly and smoothly.

OVERALL 74%

BARBARIAN II
● Kixx, £2.99 (Rerelease)

You can't keep a good villain down (missus), and one such mean dude is Drax. After being defeated by the barbarian (in *Barbarian*, surprisingly enough), he vowed revenge on all who'd crossed him. To prevent him from fulfilling this threat, you — either as the hunky, axe-wielding barbarian or the sword-swiping, busty Princess Mariana — must hack your way to his fortress and slay the nasty old mage.

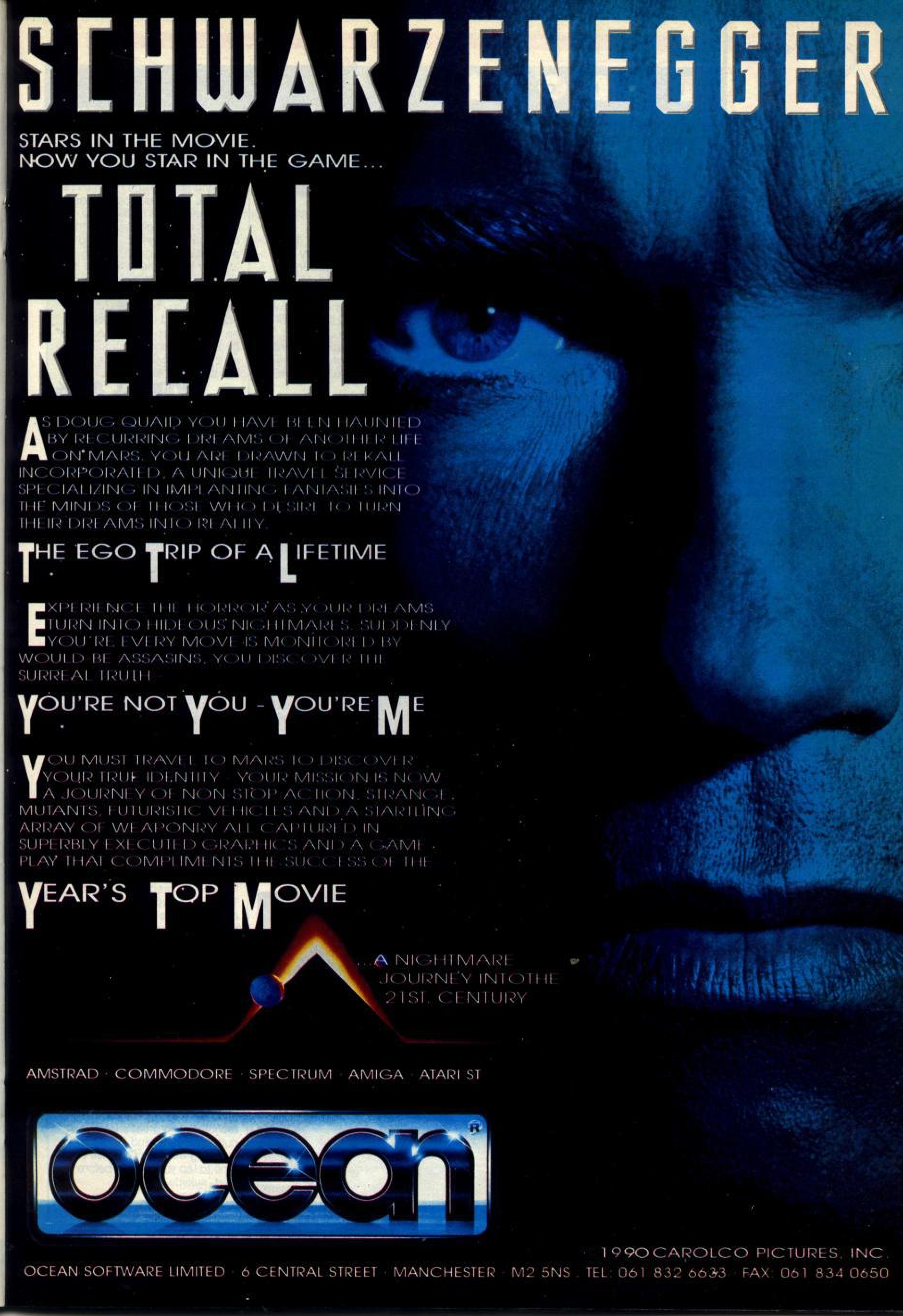
There are four flickscreen levels, each in the form of a small maze; archways allow you to reach paths at 90° to the current one, a sword compass aiding navigation. Keys, lives and magical items to defend against Drax's guardians can be found but much more frequently encountered are the various monsters. A variety of moves are at your disposal to slay (amongst others) Neanderthals, orcs, giant grubs and mutant chickens!

Considering the repetitive one-on-one hack-'em-up action of the original Palace *Barbarian* (*The Ultimate Warrior*), the sequel's quite a departure. Sheer variety of moves has been sacrificed for exploration, lots of enemy sprites and mild arcade adventure elements. The change certainly went down well with the ZZAP! crew of Issue 40 (August 1988), who gave it 96% and a Gold Medal. Paul Glancey said, 'it's easy to get involved in the violent gameplay'; while Paul Sumner enthused, 'anyone who enjoys beat-'em-ups of any style will love *Barbarian II* and can be assured of money well spent.'

Two years on, gameplay seems a lot more crude and clichéd, and lastability dubious. Attack moves are adequate but it's frustratingly easy to accidently turn around when you want a low swipe — and if you're backed against a wall that means you'll lose lots of energy before you can face your opponent again. Sprites are well designed and animated, the sequence where you teeter on the edge of a pit particularly good, and there are some brilliant sample-like effects. Aesthetics aside, *Barbarian II* is a fun but limited sword and sorcery jaunt.

OVERALL 78%




SCHWARZENEGGER
STARS IN THE MOVIE.
NOW YOU STAR IN THE GAME...
TOTAL RECALL
AS DOUG QUAID YOU HAVE BEEN HAUNTED BY RECURRING DREAMS OF ANOTHER LIFE ON MARS. YOU ARE DRAWN TO REKALL INCORPORATED, A UNIQUE TRAVEL SERVICE SPECIALIZING IN IMPLANTING FANTASIES INTO THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO DESIRE TO TURN THEIR DREAMS INTO REALITY.
THE EGO TRIP OF A LIFETIME
EXPERIENCE THE HORROR AS YOUR DREAMS TURN INTO HIDEOUS NIGHTMARES. SUDDENLY YOU'RE EVERY MOVE IS MONITORED BY WOULD-BE ASSASINS. YOU DISCOVER THE SURREAL TRUTH -
YOU'RE NOT YOU - YOU'RE ME
YOU MUST TRAVEL TO MARS TO DISCOVER YOUR TRUE IDENTITY - YOUR MISSION IS NOW A JOURNEY OF NON STOP ACTION, STRANGE MUTANTS, FUTURISTIC VEHICLES AND A STARTLING ARRAY OF WEAPONRY ALL CAPTURED IN SUPERBLY EXECUTED GRAPHICS AND A GAME-PLAY THAT COMPLIMENTS THE SUCCESS OF THE
YEAR'S TOP MOVIE
...A NIGHTMARE JOURNEY INTOTHE 21ST. CENTURY
AMSTRAD · COMMODORE · SPECTRUM · AMIGA · ATARI ST
ocean
1990 CAROLCO PICTURES, INC.
OCEAN SOFTWARE LIMITED · 6 CENTRAL STREET · MANCHESTER · M2 5NS . TEL: 061 832 6633 · FAX: 061 834 0650

KWIK SNAX
● Code Masters, £2.99



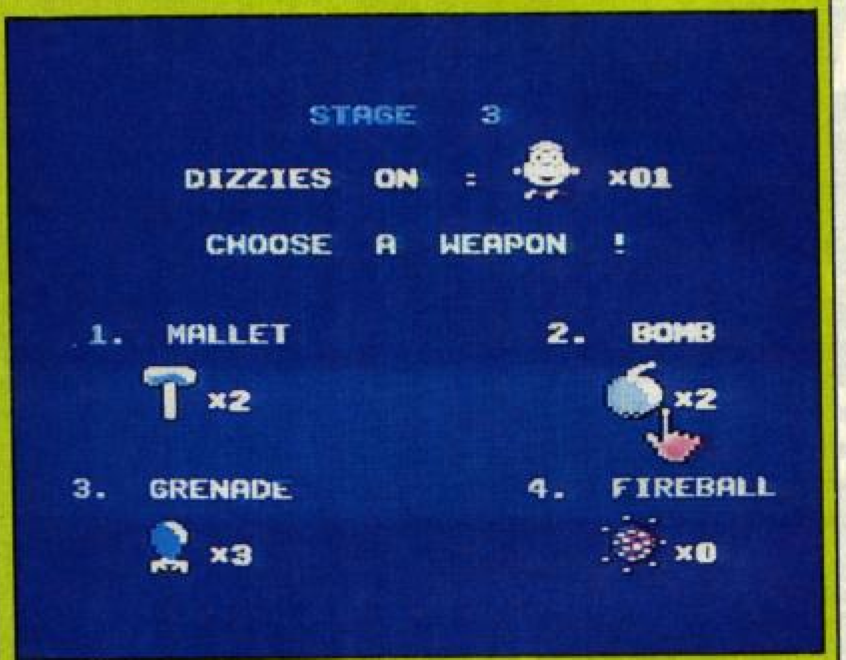
After *Fast Food* that eminent egghead Dizzy prepares for another dose of indigestion. This time he's got to rescue all the fluffles (tiny, furry creatures) held prisoner in Castle Vulture which comprises 16 horizontally scrolling mazes. In each of these Dizzy has to catch all the wandering fluffles (after they hatch out from their eggs) and lead them to the exit — they follow him in single file, duckling fashion.

Of course, the grotesque denizens of the castle try to see it that Dizzy ends up with egg on his face. These, which remove a life on contact, include spiders which can crawl over the maze walls, and fireball-launching ghosts. The nasties can also pinch any of the fluffles following Dizzy, sending them flying into the air to land far away. Thankfully, before each level Dizzy can choose a weapon — up to three mallets, bombs, grenades or fireballs — to shoot nasties and destroy some of the gates which bar his way. There are also plenty of bonuses to pick up, some for points and others for extra lives and weapons — there's even a magnet which brings all the fluffles immediately to Dizzy.

After completing a floor (four mazes) of the castle, Dizzy can earn extra points by catching objects in his butterfly net before they fall into the shark-infested moat. The bombs which also fall must be avoided! At the start of each game you can choose to start on the first, second or third floor, the latter two giving a huge points bonus to make up for the mazes missed.

Kwik Snax is a great little maze game, better presented (with a jolly in-game tune and okay, cutesy graphics) and much more playable than *Fast Food*. Chasing the sickenly cute fluffles, who have a (very stupid) mind of their own, around is great fun. And even when you catch them, leading a long line to the exit is a very tricky task (though well worth the bonus points). It's also a good idea that you can begin on the harder second or third floors, earning a compensatory courage bonus! The bonus section is simple but great fun, eggs-actly like the game as a whole.

OVERALL 80%



KAMIKAZE
● Code Masters, £2.99

At first sight this looks like any other horizontally scrolling plane game, but the title suggests a very strange twist: you must heroically smash your small plane into a castle gate to free the hostages held inside. First, however, you must collect some explosives by shooting the plane that's carrying them. Other planes must be avoided or shot, along with soldiers and missile launchers on the ground. Just for fun, you can also shoot parachutists' chutes with humorous results: the poor little bloke flaps his arms in a vain attempt to fly before plummeting to his death!



Once you've got the explosives it's time to crash into that gate. This may seem an incredibly noble sacrifice but, in fact, you miraculously survive — and another plane miraculously appears for you to take the hostages back to base! Your plane can only carry two hostages — the number on the first level; for each subsequent level there are two extra hostages, making return trips necessary.

Kamikaze is another game with a very simple concept which is nevertheless great fun to play, the sick humour adding a great deal to its appeal — at least in the short term. Graphics are technically no great shakes, but cute and funny, and there's a swinging Maniacs Of Noise title tune to tap your feet to before the next `suicide' mission! Recommended.

OVERALL 72%

LORDS OF CHAOS

SIZZLER

Blade Software, C64 £9.95 cassette, £14.95 disk

Hotfoot from their success with the ever wonderful *Laser Squad*, Mythos Software have created another little masterpiece. Called *Lords of Chaos*, it is a strategy-based fantasy game for one to four with role-playing elements if you choose the one-player option. But I'm not telling you the plot, am I? Right well settle down chaps and let me take you to the world of the Arch Mages... (page goes all wobbly and out of focus) (shush, film planning might hear! — Ed).

In the old days the Arch Mages used to rule the world, so everything was pretty hunky dory. No plagues, floods or natural disasters (ie Jason Donovan). But then mana (raw magical energy) began to build up at an alarming rate, unpredictable things began to happen and the world started to act like a plot from a Terry Pratchett novel. The people rebelled, blaming the Mages for their misfortunes and so the Mages did a bunk as the world broke into pieces — the result of untold wars, earthquakes and Jason Donovan gigs.

Each piece of the Old World took form as individual worlds. One of these was populated by wizards, who bombarded it with much mana. Unfortunately wizard spells became useless here, so they called the world Limbo. Portals were created to venture to other Old World 'pieces'. The end result of the cataclysm was that no wars existed on the new worlds, but no peace existed either — only chaos. Strange magical creatures roamed the new worlds and wizards fought for supremacy because without power they knew they could not exist. They became (trumpet fanfare, crashing of cymbals and drumbeats) the — Lords of Chaos!

Got that? Fine — could you explain it to me please? Answers on a postcard.

Three scenarios are provided in which you control a single wizard from an overhead viewpoint. All the scenarios are variations on the treasure hunt theme. Victory points are awarded depending on both enemies killed and treasure collected. These are converted into handy experience points that can be used to upgrade your wizard's character stats.

The original character stats are set at the start of game, either by yourself or the computer. A DIY job involves a screen full of stats such as Action Points (used performing actions such as moving), Constitution (your life force), and so on. A set amount of experience points are available to strengthen the stats you want improving. But don't use them all! Spells are next and again you will need to 'spend' experience points. The more you buy the higher the cost the next time you buy that item. My old economics teacher called that 'supply and demand' — I call it 'daylight robbery.' Then give the guy a name and lo! — one well'ard wiz'ard.

The spells are pretty nifty. They range from attacking spells, such as a Magic Bolt — a physical attack, to defensive spells such as the handy 'Flood', which can be used to combat a wizard who has cast 'fire' in your direction. Also creatures risk drowning in a flooded area, so I suppose this spell has its attacking side to it.

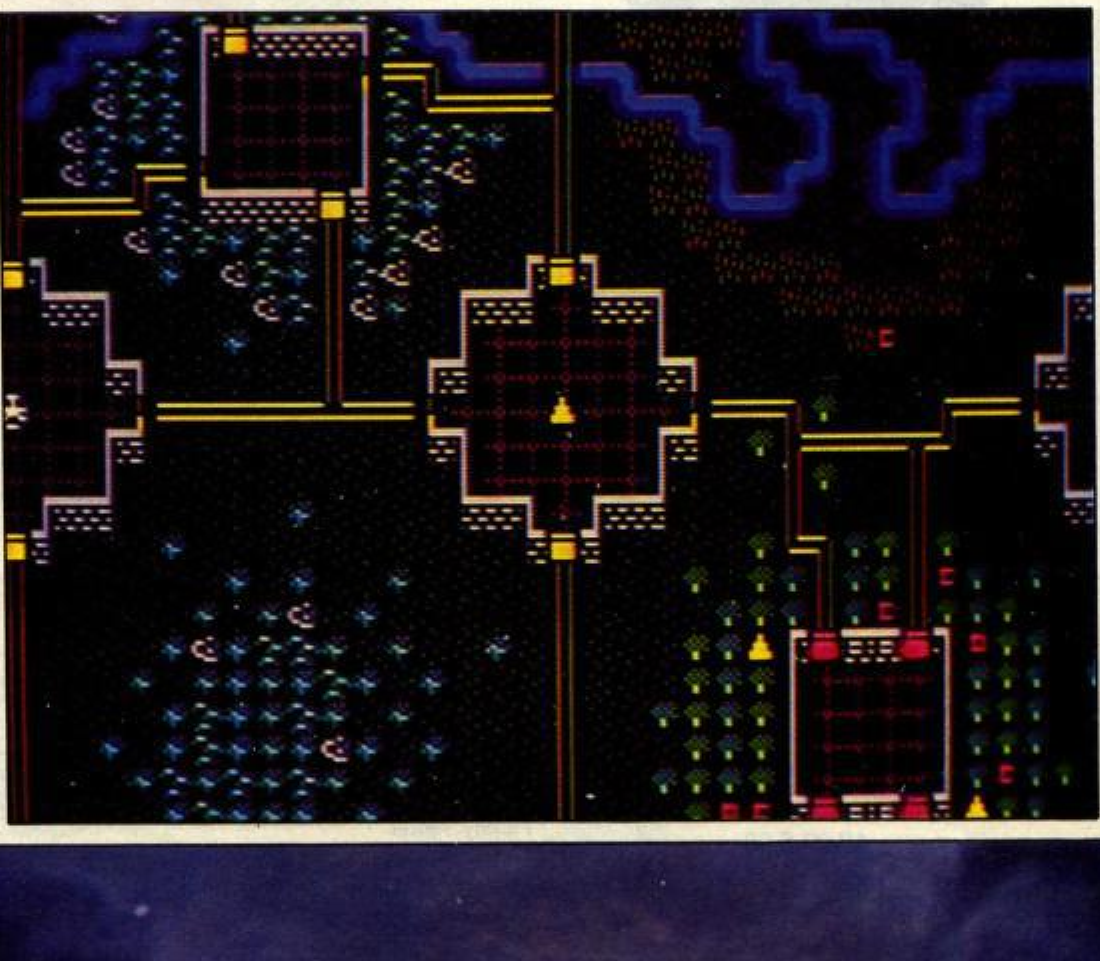
You can summon creatures, such as dwarves, to do your bidding. Dwarves, or any creature with hands, can carry and 'Use' objects. Creatures, such as Elephants, can be mounted and ridden throughout the land. Other creatures, such as harpies, can be flown. The intelligent line of sight rules come into play here, enhancing the gameplay, especially from a tactical point of view.

You can do a fair bit of interacting with the game world. Doors and chests can be opened, objects (such as weapons, vials, potions, etc) picked up and drunk/eaten and so on.

The graphics in *Chaos* are excellent with intricate pieces of spot animation that add a certain gloss to the product. For example, when a creature is summoned you see a puff of smoke before it materialises accompanied by a marvellous sound effect.

Gameplay is absorbing with many tactical opportunities available. A useful overview shows half of the total map surface, plus many of its occupants. The role-playing elements increase the level of your wizard after the successful completion of each scenario. Although there are only three scenarios they become harder as you replay them. Blade promise further scenarios in the near future which will extend gameplay even further.

Without doubt, *Lords Of Chaos* is a C64 classic. The variations in play are enormous. The combat options will satisfy any tactician, the artificial intelligence of the 'baddies' is certainly up to the job required, the graphics and sound are first class, the replay value is high — you even get a friendly tutorial piece at the beginning of the manual! If you want a game that oozes good, old fashioned quality, offers



value for your hard earned money and provides a challenge that'll keep you up to the early hours — buy *Lords Of Chaos.*

ATMOSPHERE
92%
PUZZLE FACTOR
88%
INTERACTION
91%
LASTABILITY
95%
OVERALL
91%

ZOMBI

Ubi Soft, C64
£14.99 disk

'Berkleys, United States, April 15th 1986 — and now the latest news... it has been confirmed that the plague affecting the area has spread worldwide... indeed they burst out from everywhere, from graveyards and mortuaries. They are dead bodies that came back to life... they feed on the flesh of their victims... lock yourselves in and wait for rescue teams...'

So Ubi Soft's *Zombi* comic begins. Comic? Yes, Ubi Soft turned the game manual into a comic, which continues after the radio announcement to show us some people holed up in a house. Realising that they cannot wait for the rescue teams due to their low supplies, they decide to make a break for it. One of the members suggests the hospital as there is a helicopter sitting, rather conveniently, outside. So off they pop. Some of the team are picked off by the Zombi hordes on the way but, eventually, they find the helicopter and fly off. Horror of horrors but isn't the fuel tank nearly empty? So they land on top of a supermarket tower block to see if they can find the fuel they'll need to get the hell out. Unfortunately after the comic intro, the two pages of instructions and tips are utterly confusing.

The screen is divided into a number of sections. The largest window provides the view to the game world. Other areas include bar graphs showing character stats, inventory, character portraits and command icons.

Zombi is played on a first person perspective view through the eyes of one of four characters that you control. The world is presented in black and white line graphics. To tell the truth though you soon forget the lack of colour since the graphics are well detailed. It also makes the game a lot faster.

During play, you take control of one character (they all start on the roof by the helicopter). Then you move them down each floor of the supermarket. During your travels you will come across items lying on the floor or within containers that open if you click on them with the arrow pointer. A mouse is the best controller here but the game works just as well with a joystick or keyboard. Items taken into your inventory can be used on other objects — a video tape in a video player, for example.

While you wander the area there is always the chance of a zombi appearing. When they do appear they do so very quickly. You cannot see them approaching, they appear close in. This results in a scrambling to get rid of the thing either by a weapon you may have found, or bare fists. Characters risk dying or, even worse, turning into a zombi themselves!

The game tries to promote an atmosphere of a chaotic and desolate world infested with fearful zombies. On the whole, *Zombi* just about succeeds in this as you are never sure when the next zombi will appear. Graphics are good, although sound is minimal. The one drawback of the game comes from a strange feeling you get the more you play. *Zombi* feels, well, old. The design and the gameplay are fairly good but...hmm, I dunno. It is very similar to *Catch 23*, remember that? Similar game, similar gameplay. If it had appeared three or four years ago *Zombi* would have been a cracker. But now I can't help but feel it's well past it.

ATMOSPHERE
71%
PUZZLE FACTOR
74%
INTERACTION
61%
LASTABILITY
75%
OVERALL
72%



SECRET OF THE SILVER BLADES

SSI/US Gold,
C64 £24.99
disk only

New Verdigris is a mining village. Mining, in fact is their principle source of income. Imagine the consternation, therefore, when someone strikes upon a secret vault!

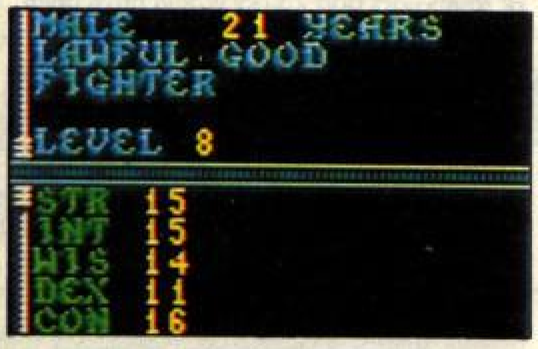
After disturbing the ancient vault, quite unpleasant... um... things have appeared. So the mayor of New Verdigris has summoned your party of warriors to flush them out. Nice of him, don't you think?

The game arrives on three disks with an instruction booklet and adventurer's journal. Both booklets include an explanation of the menus, lists of character levels and magic/combat tables as well as a batch of off-line paragraphs that you read when prompted by the game.

The screen menus, contained within a strip along the base of the screen, contain all the necessary commands. The Party Creation/Hall menu, for example, allows you to create and manipulate your party characters. So you can train them, view their stats, modify the party and so on. Within this main menu are several sub-menus that give the characteristic 'tree' menu-form seen in all of SSI's AD&D games. The sub-menus include choices like the View menu, that allows you to look at any items you're carrying, spells you have, items to trade and so forth.

During gameplay you will encounter three types of view. The initial viewpoint is a first-person perspective which will be very familiar to AD&D veterans and *Bard's Tale* players and forms the principle adventuring view. You walk into the scenery and the world moves past. The

second view is a handy overhead viewpoint that shows where you are in respect to your surroundings — especially useful when you begin to feel a little lost. The third viewpoint clicks into play when combat is initiated and is one of the main reasons that combat is so much more satisfying in SSI's AD&D games than other first-person perspective games such as *Bard's Tale* or *Dungeon Master* on the Amiga. You see all of the characters involved in the fight (yours and the enemy's) in a side-on, but slightly elevated viewpoint. This is an excellent way



to treat combat in an RPG as it allows you to implement tactical movements (ie attacking from the side and the rear).

I must admit, I have never been a big fan of SSI's AD&D system. It is far too combat oriented for my liking with little or no puzzles and not enough emphasis on the ideal of 'role-playing' which is, after all, the name of the game. Yet, to be fair, many role-players still like that style of RPG. If you are the class of player who enjoys a good hack then the AD&D system will have been very enjoyable — so far.

However, even you AD&D diehards will be disconcerted with *Silver Blades*. Because, apart from the slight graphical enhancements and the introduction of an extra few levels, the game offers nothing new. The commands and the menus present in the game are exactly the same as the others, the magic and combat system is the same, the screen layout is the same. The game structure is the same. The gameplay is the same. The plot? Okay that's different — but come on, big deal, eh?

C64 owners have come to expect high standards from their software and rightly so. Yes, the graphics are nice, as is the sound but as the gameplay is unchanged *Silver Blades* feels old before its time. SSI should, instead of succumbing to the urge to produce 16,000 AD&D games per year, sit back and plan a smaller number of impressive blockbusters. As it is, *Secret of the Silver Blades* should be banished to the Forgotten Realms, it'll do very well there.

ATMOSPHERE
40%
PUZZLE FACTOR
41%
INTERACTION
66%
LASTABILITY
80%
OVERALL
48%

BSS JANE SEYMOUR

Gremlin, Amiga £24.99

Seems like Dungeon Master clones in space are all the rage lately. Pandora's Xenomorph, the new Core game, Corporation, and now Gremlin's effort BSS Jane Seymour, intriguingly described as *'Federation Quest 1'*.

BSS is a first-person perspective game that is not really an RPG as such, although the Dungeon Master 'feel' is certainly there. The basic idea of the game is to repair 20 spaceships. Each ship contains a number of levels and variety of different objectives that must be completed. Above all, the ship's ailing systems must be restored to 80% efficiency or more.

Generally the repairs can all be made by adding liquid coolant to the damaged systems. Fine, but what do you carry it in? You will need to create a suitable receptacle (in the Manufacturing Room), unless you can find one lying around. Then you can travel around the ship repairing the individual systems with the aid of a repair kit.

Which would be all well and good, if there wasn't a time limit and umpteen monsters with long teeth...

The game screen is split up into a number of sections. The largest being the window onto the game world. To the right of that is a directional command indicator, icons to show what you hold in your hands and a text window. Below lies a weapon reload bar, your life force, beating heart, life trace recorder, background radiation meter and function buttons. The latter are blank but fill up generally when there is a robot or a computer in the room that you can manipulate.

Robots are handy things. They are not necessary to complete the game but speed up the work. Some robots carry weapons, other droids are specialists in repairing things and so on. You can give droids commands like 'follow me' or you can 'program' them with macro-type commands, to do other things in a different area of the ship, saving time.

Useful objects are found lying around. When you pick them up you can, usually, put them anywhere on your inventory screen — whether that be in your backpack, belt, hands, etc. Objects include door passes, weapons, and cartridges to plug into droids to give them extra abilities.

Character interaction, apart from the droids, is relatively minimal as most of the life forms you face will be monsters (although the ship's crew will appear at times). The game characters (monsters, etc), while nicely drawn, are a little two-dimensional, sound is sparse but what is present is of a good quality. However, having said all that the gameplay is enjoyable, the challenge is high as is the quality of the graphics. *BSS* is certainly value for money as it will take you some time to get through the 20 ships. Try Jane for size — you won't be disappointed (ahem, ahem).



ATMOSPHERE
80%
PUZZLE FACTOR
81%
INTERACTION
76%
LASTABILTY
86%
OVERALL
81%

UNIVERSE 3

Omnitrend/ Impressions, Amiga £24.99

You live in the Local Group, a colony which has been isolated from Earth for 300 years. You command a ship to re-establish diplomatic relations with Earth. The only problem is that there is a traitor on board.

Universe 3 adopts a similar design and interface to Omnitrend's *Paladin* and *Breach* games. Icons are available for a range of actions including movement and dropping objects but keyboard commands are available too. Examining an objects is achieved by moving up to it and selecting Examine from the verb menu (where other commands such as Wear, Break, etc are listed). This list is rather clunky as quite a few are only used once and others restrict your actions — severely on occasion. In addition, when you make some sort of improper action you receive little feedback, giving a rather wooden feel to the game.

There are occasions when you can zoom into an object or person (whereupon a close-up picture will fill the screen) to manipulate objects on a larger scale. However, most of the action is via the look-down, *Ultima*-type view. Stats give an overview of your character's well-being.

Interaction is noticeable by its absence, dialogues being automatic affairs. *Universe 3* is simple to set up but can be a little tricky to use, I had trouble using the Zoom command from the keyboard although accessing it by mouse was no problem. The plot, while having some depth, is very linear.

Speed can be a problem. Though there are methods to quicken movement things grind to a halt when many characters are on-screen at the same time. *Universe I* and *II* were never distributed over here. While by no means perfect they contained immense flexibility and quite a bit of depth. *Universe III*, however, contains none of these features. Overall, a disappointing game.

ATMOSPHERE
38%
PUZZLE FACTOR
58%
INTERACTION
30%
LASTABILITY
45%
OVERALL
42%

DRAGONFLIGHT



Thalion, Amiga £34.99

What on earth happened down in the Dragon's Vale? There they were, doing dragon-like things, whatever they may have been and pooof or, possibly, fwoom. It happened. Something. What, I'm not too sure. But I can tell you this — it certainly happened and now the dragons have gone. Oh, and so has the magic. I dunno, if it's not tied down...

Find the old scriptures so that you can teach the magical ways to all and sundry plus — find out what happened to those dragons I mentioned earlier. Have they vanished or been viciously slaughtered (ugh)? Best hurry up, though, 'cause the land will go to wrack and ruin, otherwise.

Dragonflight uses a top-down view for play around the outside world but reverts to a first-person perspective when you're in the dungeons.

During play you control four pre-rolled characters. The main components of the game system include the usual system of visiting a variety of towns, buying weapons and food, talking to people and utilising taverns for information. This is done by entering the tavern, buying a drink and overhearing some snippet of info.

Actually talking to the wandering villagers or occupants of the buildings is done via clicking on a mouth icon. Unfortunately, this means interaction is pretty basic, unlike the later *Ultimas* that incorporate a nifty keyword system plus options to cross-examine characters that gives you an illusion of freedom. In addition, I have grown used to seeing a close-up portrait of characters I come into contact with, none of this 'gloss' was present in *Dragonflight*, however. The NPC replies are quite wordy, though.

One aspect that I liked a lot about *Dragonflight* is the mouse-controlled command system. Normally when a WIMP interface is used it can be a bit of a mess. However, Thalion have developed a very efficient menu system that cuts down 'mouse-wandering' to a minimum.

I'm afraid the combat has been poorly designed. You are presented with a side-view close-up showing each individual character present in the combat sequence, complete with animated action after you despatch your orders. The main problem is that you can only move each character in four directions and can attack in only two directions. Also, the character who actually kills the monster receives the experience and gold — even if a colleague has done most of the work. This is grossly unfair and actually goes against the role-playing ideal. For example, to increase the experience of a weak character you would just allow a strong character to rough up a monster while the weak character finishes him off with a single attack. Tut-tut.

Magic is handled quite well as each character must learn spells. Only one spell at a time may be held in memory.

Dragonflight is not a bad RPG, just rather average. Although the quest was a novel one I never felt excited by it. There was too much dead time, not enough involvement, just the usual 'Find Bob in x-village and he'll give you an object/info' type of puzzle. Which is all a bit old hat nowadays. While there are one or two highlights to admire, *Dragonflight* also incorporates bad design (combat) and a lack of the accepted chrome that comes as standard in other RPGs.

ATMOSPHERE
58%
PUZZLE FACTOR
77%
INTERACTION
62%
LASTABILITY
86%
OVERALL
69%

CREATURE FEATURE

Here it is — the penultimate instalment (I know we said this last month but this time we mean it), and with the standard 'Diary of a game' we also bring you a 'Diary of a good time'. Yes, this month we were forced to take a break from Creatures and go on holiday for two weeks. Oh well.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 15TH

John: It's about time I worked on another level (these trees are starting to get a tad boring), so I've uploaded the first level graphics and maps into PDS. Once I had inserted this data into my source code for the game, I downloaded it back into the C64 to see if it was okay. This is the first chance Steve gets to check the graphics to see if they match up to the ones in his editor. Luckily (I didn't say that) they did.

Also contained within this data block is the 'Get Ready' scrolling map. This was where I had a problem. Unlike the previous level I was working on (which had a black background colour), this level is on light blue, representing sky. But the 'Get Ready' scrolly code was written with black backgrounds in mind, therefore it's not able to cope with light blue ones! So I've had to insert one colour split just above the map on the screen and one just below it. When the map has scrolled onto the screen an arrowhead appears over it, indicating the position that Clyde will start. As the arrow is made up from sprites, when it appears near the bottom of the map it delays my new split. So I have to spend the best part of an hour timing out the split, keeping it rock-solid never mind what height the arrow is! Ho-hum.

Steve: Today I had the task of designing new aliens for the first level — Lily lakes, Waterfalls and Caves of Slime. The morning was spent doing the 'slime monsters', which are only found in the caves of slime. Initially the ideas were sketched out on paper, then after some development were entered into sprites and animated. As the name 'Caves of slime' suggests, there are pools of slime around which is where the slime monsters are created using a type of metamorphosis.

This level still needs an alien explosion which is different from the next level and the level after. To add a bit of variety to the level I've done two explosions, one of which is similar to the mushroom-cloud explosion in *Retrograde* level one, which will only be used on the ground. The second one can be used both on the ground and in the air.

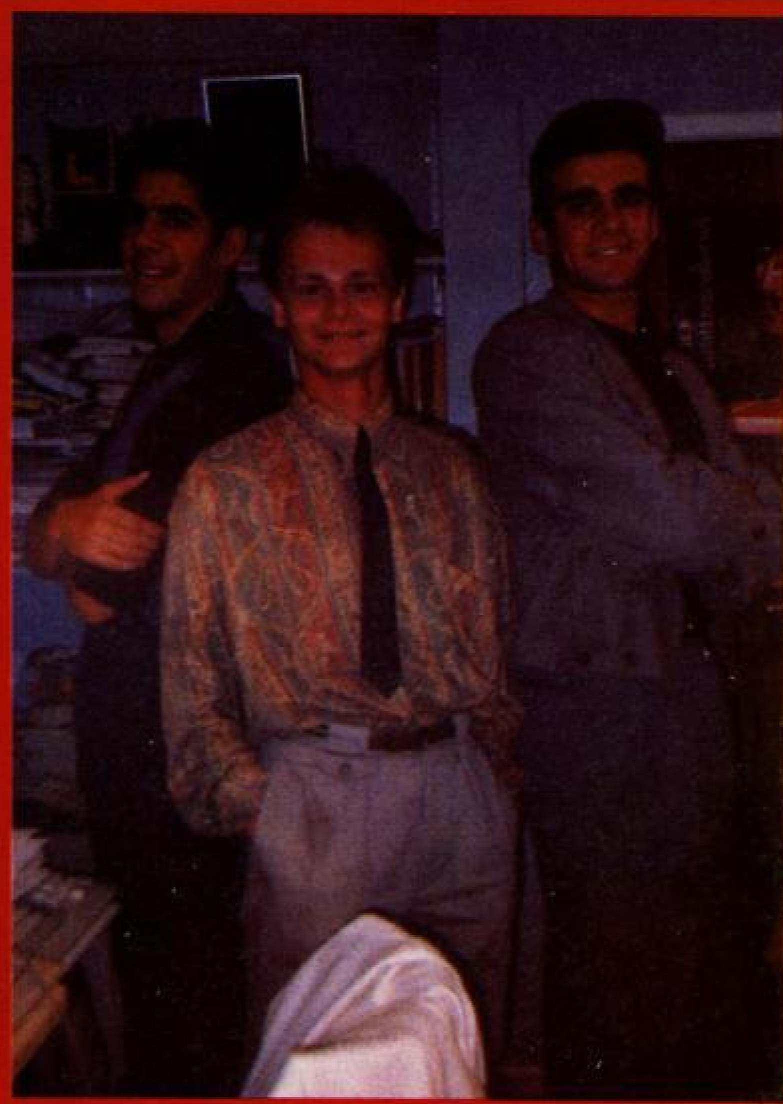
THURSDAY AUGUST 16TH

John: I spent most of the day creating attack patterns for the aliens on this level. As I mentioned a few months ago when I was typing in the previous levels attack patterns, I find this sort of thing so boring. Typing in HEX numbers all day is not my idea of fun. So, by mid afternoon I'm bored out of my mind and decided to do something else.

The thing I decided to do was the noise of the waterfall. This will only sound if the player has selected the 'Music Off' option on the 'Get Ready' attract sequence, as the C64 has only got three voices and two of them are used for all of Clyde's SFX. We thought we'd make the sound fade in as Clyde gets closer to it and fade out as he walks away. So after messing around with out SFX editor and coming up with a reasonable 'gushing water' effect, all I had to do was increase and decrease its volume. As the C64 has only got one volume register covering all three voices and not one for each voice, I can't fade it this way (unless al' the sound effects fade out... no, I don't think so). So the next best thing is modifying the effect's ADSR values (Attack Decay Sustain Release, the basic sound envelope — Ed). By altering its Sustain, I can effectively change its volume. Which is exactly what I did, and now it's finished it sounds really atmospheric.

Steve: I'm trying to continue with the sprites for the first level but am having a bit of a hard time thinking up new aliens. I bolted together a few sprites for the large end-of-level alien, and played around with a few ideas. Finally I came up with an alien I liked, which will fly around shooting out fireballs at you. Next I went back to designing the normal one-sprite aliens and expected to be messing around with different looking aliens for ages until I did one I liked, which is what normally happens. I was surprised when one of the first ideas I did turned out well, this was a variation of a rat-type creature used on level two's torture screen. I was even more surprised to find that the idea I did next turned out well, it's the 'balloon monster'. There's a hot air balloon floating around in the air with a little monster in the basket who throws out fireballs (what a surprise!) and you have to get past it. Well

★ Robin digs out one of his more subtle shirts to go clubbing with the Rowland brothers.



I'm on a roll, I've still loads more ideas to do but time is running out so I'll jot them down on paper and do them tomorrow.

FRIDAY AUGUST 17TH

John: We received a phone call from Creative Materials this morning (the guys doing the 16-bit conversions (previous games include *Rotox* and *Days Of Thunder* — Ed)), saying that their demo disk of *Creatures* has corrupted. So I had to spend a good part of the morning getting together another demo disk (the back-up button on the cartridge didn't help me out much either, only working every fifth time I pressed it, and screwing up the game every other time).

I spent the rest of the day doing more attack patterns for the enemy sprites. Then we both had to go to Chelmsford train station to meet a mega-star. Well not a mega-star but he's getting there (so he likes to think). Yes, it's our very own (...drum roll...) Robin Hogg. He came all the way down to Essex to review a Graftgold game, and as Graftgold HQ is only 15 miles away, he thought he would accept our invitation and come over. We promised we'd take him to Southend seafront tomorrow, which is simply a mass of arcades.

Steve: Before going to the Southend arcades tomorrow we have to get through tonight, and as it's a Friday night we just have to go out. So it's the usual Friday night club, TOTS in Southend. Rob, John and I started drinking before we went out, then Andy Smith arrived but as he was driving he couldn't touch a drop. When it reached about 9.00pm we set off on the 40 min journey, pausing only to take a few snaps of us lot in a group. Rob seemed to enjoy himself but as we wouldn't get home until about 3.00am he probably wouldn't feel to good at the arcades tomorrow, well I know I wouldn't!

On the work side of things, I got the Amiga going with *Games Music Creator* and had a real good time writing some music with it (but that's not really work). Also this morning I worked on the C64, doing the *Creatures* high-score music — well I started it anyway.

MONDAY AUGUST 20TH

Spent the day packing and doing our last minute shopping, basically preparing for our holiday. We leave for Magaluf (Majorca) tomorrow, and won't be able to work on the game for two weeks. But don't worry, as we'll (attempt to) keep a 'Diary of a good time' while we're over there.

SATURDAY AUGUST 25TH

★ What scenery! A 'cheeky' postcard from the Rowland bros!



Hot.
We thought of home today and bought some postcards. Don't know when we're going write them but that's not the point. We've been to BCMs every night so far, or should that be every morning (as we don't usually get there until 2.00am and stay until about 5.30)? BCMs is the biggest nightclub in Europe, and we have already got our BCM caps to don on the beach. We've also noticed some arcades near the hotel but they're always closed as we go past them on our pub crawls at about 11.00pm each night. We'll have to go in them soon.

TUESDAY AUGUST 28TH

Damn hot.
Spent the entire day at a beach party which was hot to say the least. The temperature was 120 degrees and when you're on a beach (playing drinking games all day) there ain't much shade! We got around to writing the postcards today, all we need to do now is post 'em (when we get the time).
Actually thought of a good idea for *Creatures* last night but as we were both rat-faced we can't remember the damn thing (it might of had something to do with Fuzzies drowning on their own vomit)!

FRIDAY AUGUST 31ST

Daaamn hot.
The elected drink to get totally smashed on tonight is a 'Green Goddess' (a mixture of Lemonade, Vodka, Advocaat and Blue Bols), and not surprisingly turns out green. So after John's had six pints of this (and a No 33 from the chinese), he decides to do a bit of liquid laughing at the toilet (twice) and at the sink in our hotel room. And a very nice shade of green it was too.

We visited one of the arcades earlier today and found ourselves spending a couple of hours in there. All the games are a tad old but fun anyway. Some of our fave games were *Spirit Ninja*, *Operation Thunderbolt* and a cool shoot 'em-up which we can't remember the name of! We couldn't help noticing a game called *Jumping*, which looked like a direct rip-off from *Rainbow Islands* (but we didn't say that).

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 4TH

The final day.
The postcards were posted on Sunday, so everyone should (hopefully) have received them by now. We both have coughs after visiting AQUA CITY last week, and so do a lot of our mates. We both have great tans too. It's been an absolutely brilliant holiday, but like all good things it must come to an end. So tomorrow it's back to the real world and back to work.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 6TH

John: Having looked at the status for the first time in two weeks, I decided I didn't like the 'Magic Potion Creature' sprite. So I changed it to the ones used in the game, with it cycling through the three different types. I also did the pattern for the hot-air balloon Steve designed before our holiday.

When we finished work tonight I had a sudden urge to play *Retrograde* (don't ask me why). I haven't played this in about 6 months. Mind you, by the time I had got to level 3 I'd been playing it for a couple of hours and was feeling tired, so I switched it off and went to bed (but I reckon I could have completed it if I'd carried on playing).

Steve: After a constant 14 days of the same routine: get up, lie on the beach, get drunk, go to bed (to sleep of course), we feel a bit worn out. We could do with another holiday to get over the last one, but it was good while it lasted — and here's a big hello to Sandra from Manchester.

I'm continuing with first level sprites, and have come up with a good idea for an alien or two. There is one blob-type alien sitting on the ground with another similar alien sitting on his head. These aliens alternately shoot out bullets which you have to dodge and at the same time kill the two blobs, no easy task!

Still on the sprite side of things, we now decided it was time to give Clyde his death routine. This will be hard as we are running out of memory so the less sprites it is the better. The best idea was that when Clyde touches an alien he squirms a bit and shouts out some sort of death word. These will change depending on how he dies.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 7TH

John: So finally Clyde is going to be able to die. This is going to make the game more like a game, and not a demo. As Steve said he's going to squirm as he dies. The problem is that if he dies above ground (eg if he's jumping), you get him frantically waving his arms and legs around in mid air, which don't look too hot.

I've played countless games (including arcade games) which kill the player by animating him 'collapsing to the ground' whether he's actually on the ground or not. Now this seems pretty stupid to me, so I've added a little detection routine which will make Clyde fall to the ground as he dies.

I also had to check the surrounding terrain when Clyde dies, so if he's in water he has to say 'GULP'. He has to say 'AAAAH' and 'OUCH' normally, so instead of toggling the speech bubbles (as I initially did) I made it random. Steve wanted to put in four different bubbles, but as I'm quickly running out of memory I had to cut it down to two. Sorry.

Steve: After doing the sprites for Clyde's death the next thing is the sound effects, but just to be different we decided to make it a piece of music which starts off as a death sound effect but turns into a short ditty.

I was now taking Clyde through the first level map, it seemed a bit short for the first level so it was time to add some more. At the end of level one Clyde goes into the caves of slime, so I made these caves about twice as long as before.

While I was adding bits to the end of the map I went back and changed a few little parts of the level that I didn't really like — it has to be perfect you know.

John's got the hi-score music and wants to do the hi-score screen, so I'll have to do the graphics and window for him so he can get on with it.


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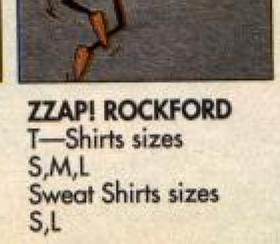
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CYBER TALK

THE PROGRAMERS OF ARMALYTE SPEAK OUT!



★ John Kemp, Robin Levy, Dan Phillips (l-r).

It's been two long years since *Armalyte* staked its claim to being the best C64 shoot-'em-up ever. Scintillating graphics, simultaneous two-player action and extreme difficulty earned it 97% and a Gold Medal. Amazingly, it was the first ever game of its Exeter-based authors, Cyberdyne Systems. Yet this three-man team has remained shrouded in mystery, granting no interviews and no pictures. But with *Armalyte 2* due for an early 1991 release, ROBIN HOGG finally got to meet the enigmatic geniuses, talking mainly with programmer Dan Phillips. In the first part of a two-part feature Robin asks about the programming of *Armalyte* and discovers a darker side to the software industry.

● Far from being the huge team of programmers and graphic artists you might expect of one of the C64's best programming teams, Cyberdyne Systems is very much a close knit, small time affair. Consisting of Dan Phillips (main code programmer), John Kemp (system programmer) and Robin Levy (graphics), the Cyberdyne crew have been busy over the past two years following up their debut game with new ideas, new games and vastly improved programming techniques, but all to little avail. Nothing has emerged with the Cyberdyne tag — *not yet*.

As Dan Phillips explains, things have been very busy for the crew in the post-*Armalyte* period but even for the best of the best, not all has gone well...

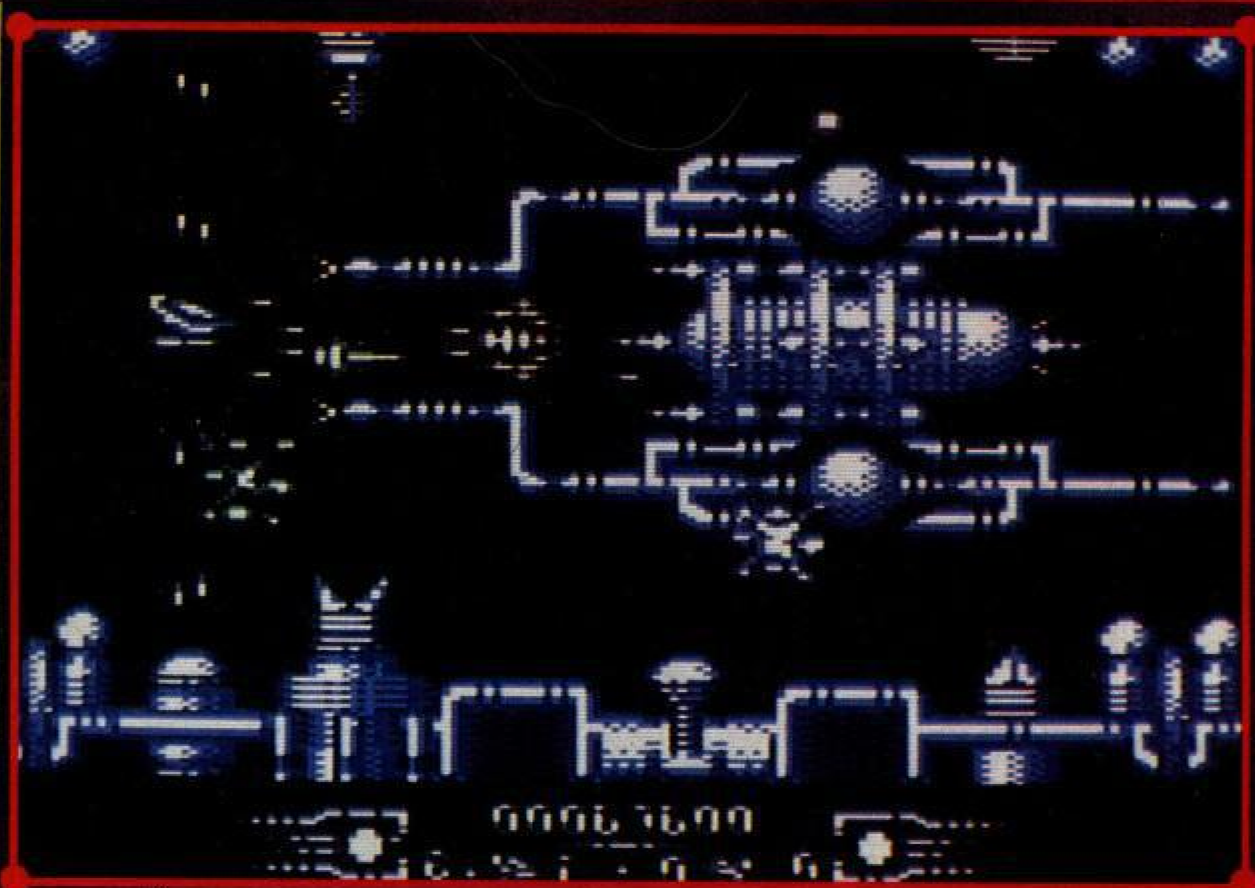
'Cyberdyne Systems was formed three years ago in July/August just before the 1987 PCW Show. We were all in college doing nothing and came together to swap ideas on coding and suchlike. At first we put together some stuff on the C64 and it looked a bit like *Salamander*, in fact when we went to the show we took these incredibly naff demos, a load of crap really but funnily enough the first people we saw were Konami! They said that someone had been signed up to convert *Salamander* already [Peter Baron and Bob Stevenson for Imagine]. We also saw a demo of *Io*, the one done by Doug Hare [and Bob Stevenson], which scared the crap out of us as it looked really good. When a finished copy of the game came through afterwards we loaded it up, played it for five minutes or so and found it unplayable which was a relief.'

While at the PCW Show, Cyberdyne first came into contact with ZZAP! and Thalamus in one deft action through Julian Rignall, no less. But other things didn't go quite so well: 'We showed our demos to Jazza who liked it and he also introduced us to Paul Cooper of Thalamus but no contracts to write *Armalyte* were signed until April of the following year!'

Branching away briefly, what not many people know about Cyberdyne Systems (and until this interview, that included me) was that the team was actually a four-piece set to start with. John Harries, a friend of Rob *Snare* Stevens who was introduced to Cyberdyne in mid-87, was a member of the collective group and took part in the initial coding

★ *Armalyte 2*: the original level graphics from *Armalyte* are being temporarily used here but witness the awesome, diagonal firepower of the new ship. Note that three drones replace the original's one.





he got to completing any was a title screen!'

Dan joins in, 'I didn't start learning code until around the late Summer of '87. Between then and *Armalyte* I was just learning to program the C64 and after that we began to realise how crap John Harries was. He was with us for six months or so before going off to Thalamus... but we don't talk about him!'

John Harries is credited with 'original algorithms, additional programming' in the *Armalyte* inlay but as Dan reveals, 'He was working for Thalamus by then and while he was there he must



of *Armalyte*.

As John Kemp explains, 'He was quite useful in the beginning, he wrote the boot code and an alien animations routine, he was alright until we moved out of working at his home and into my house [where Cyberdyne are still based] and after that he was a pain in the behind basically. He was looking over Robin's shoulder all the time, doing small bits and pieces of work and not really doing anything and he started writing some editors which was my work. He was supposed to be writing some small games to sell to keep us going — the nearest have intercepted the finished game because he put a credit in the inlay and a hidden message on the tape loader of *Armalyte*, black text on black with a message along the lines of "uncredited programmer — John Harries". He wasn't with Thalamus for long and shortly after he "left".' Exit John H from the tale.

Going back to Cyberdyne's first steps. Following an agreement with Thalamus, when did things start happening for the team?

'Well, during the initial development stages of *Armalyte* [pre-contract] we helped with the mastering of *Hunter's Moon* around November of '87. It was over to the masterers to assist and we were there for four days writing an end-sequence for the game! Four days without sleep! What happened for us to get into this situation was that Robin got talking with Martin [Martin Walker — author of *Hunter's Moon* and *Citadel*] and Robin said, "Yeah, we'll do the end", meaning just the graphics. Martin assumed he meant the *entire* end-sequence and because Robin can't do programming we were dragged into it, so we worked for four days: one day writing the thing, the other three debugging it!! Actually John [Kemp] coded the end-sequence, I was thoroughly bored stiff by it all!

'What narked us off was not really the work involved on *Hunter's Moon* but that Robin gave Martin some graphics for his later project *Citadel* and I gave him the multi-plexor routines and other stuff, and Martin never called us back afterwards! Robin wasn't exactly paid for his work either, contributing the sprites and background stuff. Martin was going to do the sound effects for *Deadlock* too but that came to nothing.'

A great deal of hassle for little reward it seems, but with the advent of Armalyte, didn't things change for the better?

'On the 1st of April we signed the contract to do *Armalyte* back in 1988 ["Guess who were the fools!" came the unidentified reply down a dodgy phone line]. We didn't know this at the time, but we were expected to finish it by the 1st of May! Paul [Cooper] just didn't have a clue about all the business of contracts. We'd have had to work 36 hours a day to manage it so it was good to find out later on that Paul and Thalamus were flexible on deadlines.'

No more than a month to finish the bulk of the project sounds incredible, what on earth went wrong to come up with a deal like that, Dan?

'I wasn't present at the contract signing: John Harries [remember him?] was there with Robin and John [Kemp] and he just ignored them, he said, "Yeah, we'll do it in a month" to Paul while he was sitting across from the others and that narked us off. Another thing was that the royalty rates were less than we were led to believe-which was a bit of a bummer.

'We were paid an advance for *Armalyte* but we didn't buy any equipment with that money. We used *Laser Genius ASM* [released through Ocean] for coding, the best on the market for the C64 — the editors were written in BASIC!

Any major problems during the production of Armalyte?

'I remember one time when Martin [Walker] came down to install the sound effects routine for *Armalyte*, we loaded it up and the whole thing just overran in memory and everything was flickering all over the place and falling apart, 16 sprites on screen and scroll and it was all falling down. I spent two hours worrying about it flickering, in the end I rewrote the code from scratch: it took three weeks to rewrite but we had the base code, game ideas and structure to work from.'

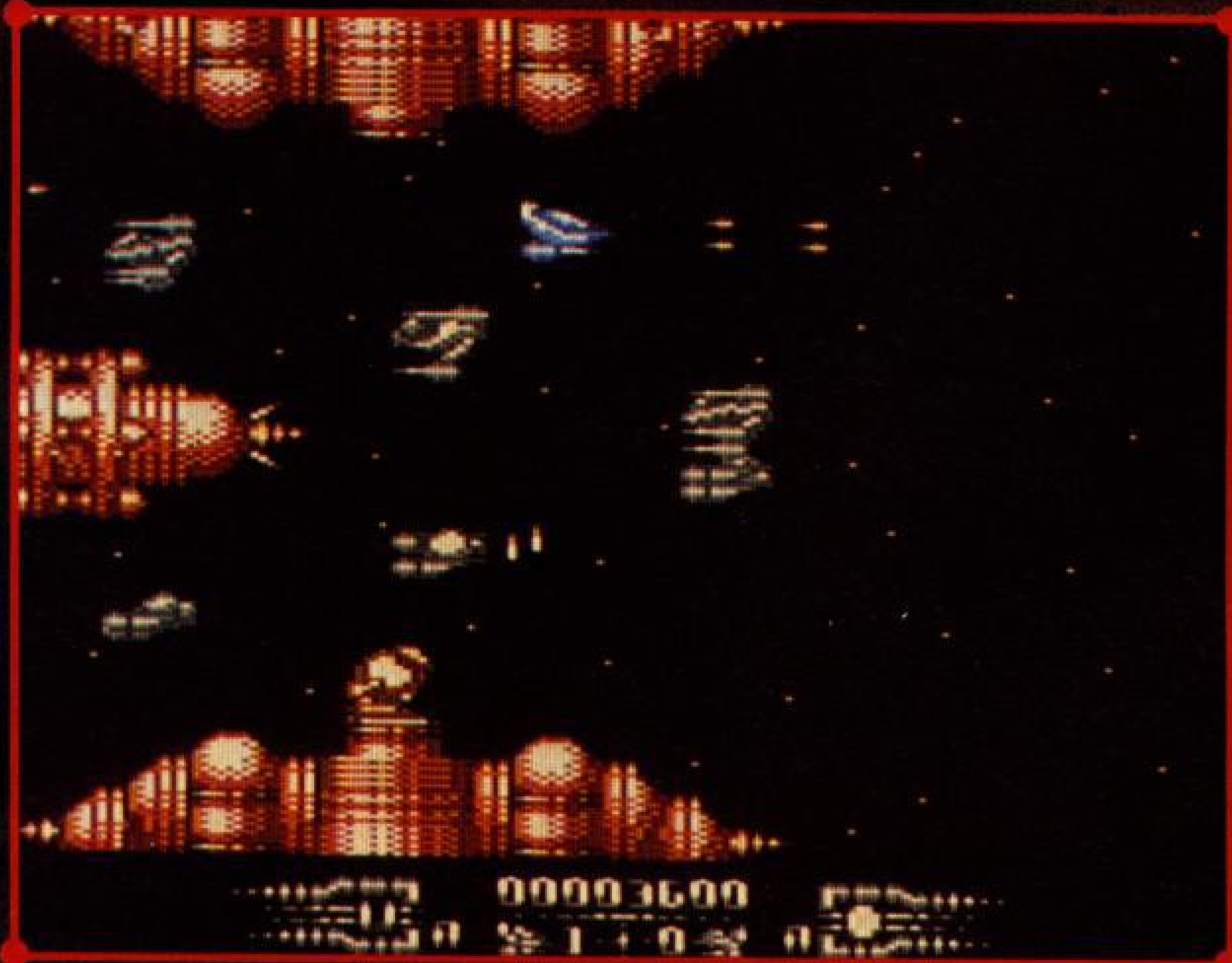
But still the problems persisted?

'Paul wasn't very happy with how *Armalyte* was progressing. He was a pain, he was never available and spun us a load of old crap. He was influenced by a certain third party into thinking that Cyberdyne Systems weren't too good which didn't help — eventually he left though.

'Probably the biggest contributing factor to any delay in programming *Armalyte* was... *Dungeon Master*! We liked it a lot, playing it for hours until we completed it. After we did that it was



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★ The original *Armalyte*: the best shoot-'em-up ever?

alright and we got back to work as code stopped for a while at the point when about four levels had been done. We felt guilty as Robin was slaving away on C64 graphics all the time, so blame Mirrorsoft for that!'

Why Armalyte for a name though?

'*Armalyte* was originally called *Starburst*, then we went through *Manowar* and *Magnox* [which was the name of an earlier game that was never finished] and finally ended up with *Armalyte*. The name was chosen by John Harries, about the only constructive thing he did while he was with us. The name comes from a Heavy Metal album or a song, we don't know which one so if anybody knows where the *Armalyte* lyric is from then let us know [via a letter to Rob H at ZZAP!].'

The coding and graphics can't have gone right first time though, surely?

'No. Robin had three goes at the *Armalyte* graphics. The first version was a bas relief effect which was scrapped for a second crystalline effect which was really naff. The third version was a lot nearer the mark and it was implemented.

'The sound effects are a bit of bum too as they were updated 300 times [slight exaggeration there Dan!] and Martin didn't know how to do proper shoot effects. At one stage there was an ongoing argument between me and him as to why the effects were buggering up during testing. There was a problem between priorities where the sound routine was processing a higher priority sound [like the superweapon firing] and then came across a low priority routine [an alien explosion] it went to an RTS and slurred the sound. Eventually I looked through his sound routine and rewrote part of it to provide a temporary correction and we told Martin to fix it in his sound routine.'

I gather the skill level was constantly tweaked?

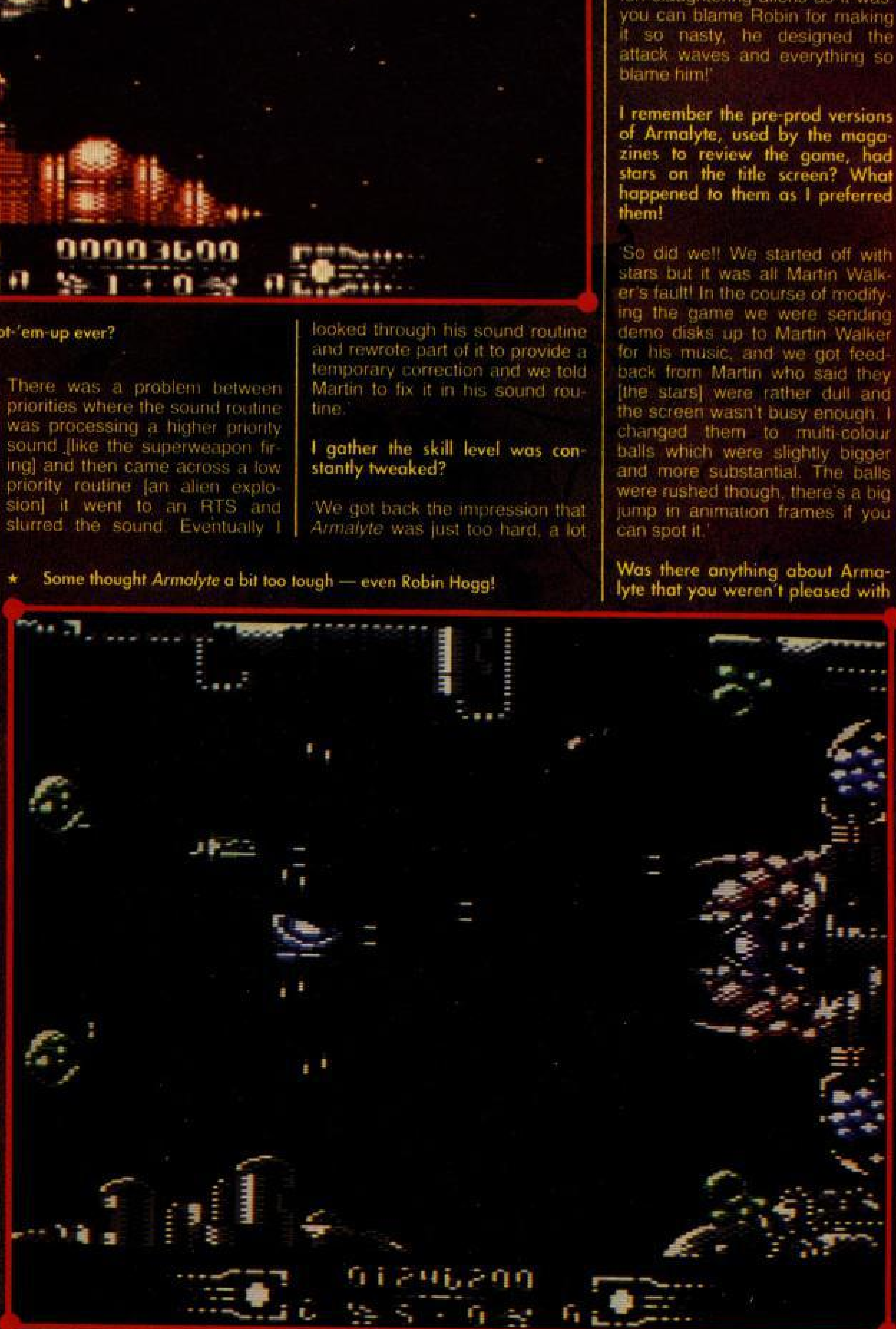
'We got back the impression that *Armalyte* was just too hard, a lot of people couldn't get past level two which narked us off as people hadn't seen more than 20-30% of the game. When we were playtesting we could get through the game easily enough: John and me managed to kill 98% of the aliens in the game once! Actually, it would have been much harder if Jazza hadn't seen it and phoned up to say that it was far too hard! Robin didn't plan level five to be so difficult — it was originally going to be an earlier level, only during playtesting when someone said it was a bit difficult did we up the challenge level [and made it level five]. We found it incredibly good fun slaughtering aliens as it was: you can blame Robin for making it so nasty, he designed the attack waves and everything so blame him!'

I remember the pre-prod versions of Armalyte, used by the magazines to review the game, had stars on the title screen? What happened to them as I preferred them!

'So did we!! We started off with stars but it was all Martin Walker's fault! In the course of modifying the game we were sending demo disks up to Martin Walker for his music, and we got feedback from Martin who said they [the stars] were rather dull and the screen wasn't busy enough. I changed them to multi-colour balls which were slightly bigger and more substantial. The balls were rushed though, there's a big jump in animation frames if you can spot it.'

Was there anything about Armalyte that you weren't pleased with

★ Some thought *Armalyte* a bit too tough — even Robin Hogg!







which us mortals wouldn't have noticed?

'Something that was a botch- up was the lack of one screen in the end sequence. Robin was meant to do it but went up to help Martin Walker [on *Citadel*] and didn't have time to finish it before mastering.

'We could have had a save-score-to-disk feature as well but there wasn't enough space or time to put in a proper save routine. The disk wasn't notched either and we didn't fancy manually notching 10,000 disks like they did with *Hawkeye*!

'On the very last level, as well, there's a set of crushers and if you destroy the last one only three out of four "destroyed" sprites appear correctly. We could have changed it for the budget rerelease [planned for early '91 on the Kixx budget label] but we left it in to show that we're only human!!'

Summertime of '88, and with the PC Show looming the shoot-'em-up war began with the release of Rainbow Arts's Katakis and Imagine's Salamander. What did you think of the competition?

'*Katakis*? Not very good, basically crap. You look at the alien sequences and then look at those of *Armalyte*. In *Katakis/Denaris* all the sprites follow the same pathway whereas in *Armalyte* if you watch the level demo it's quite entertaining to see the individually programmed patterns and sequences.

'Towards the end of the programming, around August of '88 we saw *Salamander* in CU which frightened us because they gave it a good review. It looked really good in the screenshots and we were narked off by Martin Walker [again!] as he'd been up to ZZAP! with his diary and had seen it but didn't want to say anything about it and we really wanted — needed — to know!!! We weren't too worried when we saw it though, we had a good laugh over it. They'd missed out two levels, the music was misplaced, the whole thing slowed down a lot: a fairly good conversion for the time but technically not as good as it could've been.'

'In August we came up against the *R-Type/Katakis* clone incident with Activision having a go at *Katakis* and every similar game, including *Armalyte* with its "drone". Rod Cousens [of Activision] could have delayed the *Armalyte* release but if it came to court it seems as if he couldn't have done anything. You can't copyright horizontal scrollers. Rod rang up Thalamus about it and Paul said, "It's nothing like *R-Type*" and that was it! Paul got us worried though afterwards as he asked us if we had proof that it wasn't an *R-Type* game — which we could have proved if we had to, basically Activision just didn't have a leg to stand on.'

At long last in late August/early September *Armalyte* went into the final stages and by the beginning of October it was finished but a price had been paid.

'By the end we were desperate for money to keep us going, we received one cheque for completing *Armalyte* but for five months we had nothing before the royalties came in and then we got three cheques in all.

The marketing of *Armalyte* met with some disapproval as Dan explains, 'Paul Cooper said he was going to get more sales with the Delta II label on it which we weren't sure about but went ahead with it. This time *Armalyte 2* is going to rest on the *Armalyte* name. There was a long delay then before mastering but then in October of '88 it came out.

'When *Armalyte* was released the funny thing was that Oli's artwork was disappointing, Oli can do some really good stuff so we couldn't understand it. It looked rushed, maybe Paul Cooper rushed him over it but it just didn't look right."(Oli informs us that the drawing took two days, wasn't at all rushed and to quote Oli, 'Cyberdyne are entitled to their own opinion!')

Following *Armalyte*, the team did some brief work on Martin Walker's *Citadel*.

'Martin Walker sent us demos of *Citadel*. We weren't approached by anyone other than Martin and as a favour Robin went up for a couple of weeks and did some of the graphics. We were doing the mastering of *Armalyte* at the time and John finished the bitmap screens end-sequence over the weekend.

'John and Robin put an opening sequence in which was never used, three or four bitmaps with music fading out while I provided some multi-plexor code for *Citadel*. The amount of memory it took up meant another load would be needed but Martin didn't fancy [on a tape version at least] the idea of loading up the opening sequence and then the title screen and then the game, so it wasn't used. We would have done it for the disk version as the loading wouldn't have mattered.' Shame.

● Next month Cyberdyne will talk about their work on a 'new' System 3 game, the appropriately named two-year-old *Deadlock*, *Last Ninja III* and *Armalyte 2*.

★ **The extraordinary artistry of Cyberdyne is shown off by this planet scene in *Deadlock*.**





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PIG IN A POKE!



It's post-CES Show and my bunions are just about down to normal size again after all that walking around at the show (lots more space or was it less stands??). Apex, Cyberdyne Systems, half of the Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles, Rob *Snare* Stevens, Betty Boo (yeah!), Graftgold, RoboCop (again) were all there, even the monsters from Nightbreed were there with their leader, Esther. Hope you enjoyed the shower of *Creatures*, grabbed loads of freebies and had a good time! For a good time this issue just keep on reading!!

TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY

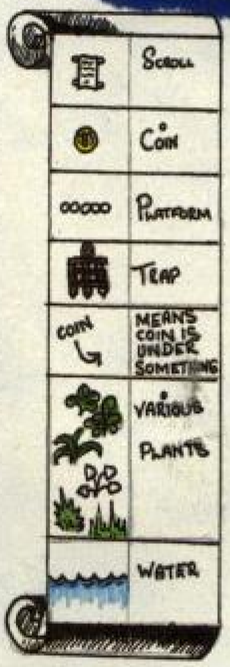
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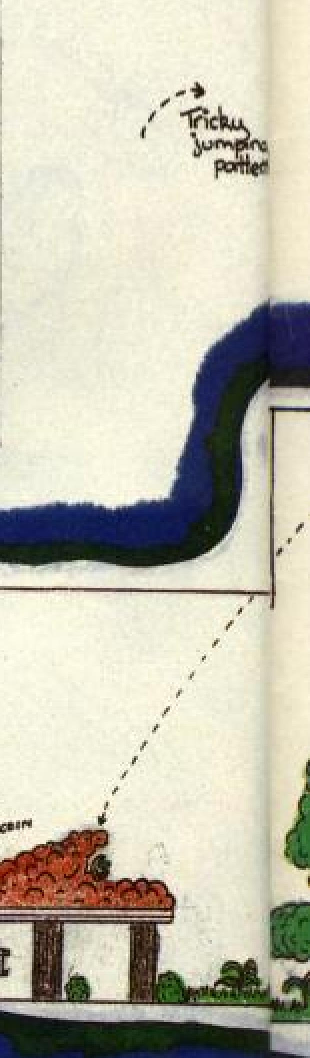
Hmmmm, we seem to be working in reverse here! After the *Fantasy World Dizzy* antics of a few issues back we now have not only the solution to the earlier C64 Dizzy game *Treasure Island Dizzy* but also a beautiful map by Simon Yarde of Worthing, Sussex. **This time it's going in, Simon, and what a map it is!! Without further ado, here's the solution and (somewhere on these pages) here's the map as well. Thanks to Stef and Si and a good few others as well. Oh and I hope this lot helps Tina!**

TREASURED TIPS

1. Plan your list of items carefully, especially when you're underwater.
2. To reach the coin above the mine behind a plant, stand in the top left hand corner of the tree house complex and jump.
3. Make a hole in the middle of the bridge with the axe or when you need to cross the gap: you'll hit the torches.
4. Remember to have all thirty gold coins before you leave both islands on the boat (don't even get on until you have them all!)
5. To exit the underwater caves under the bridge go to the far left, jump up the platforms and leave through the underneath of the grave.
6. Kicking stones in the tree-house activates platforms around the complex.







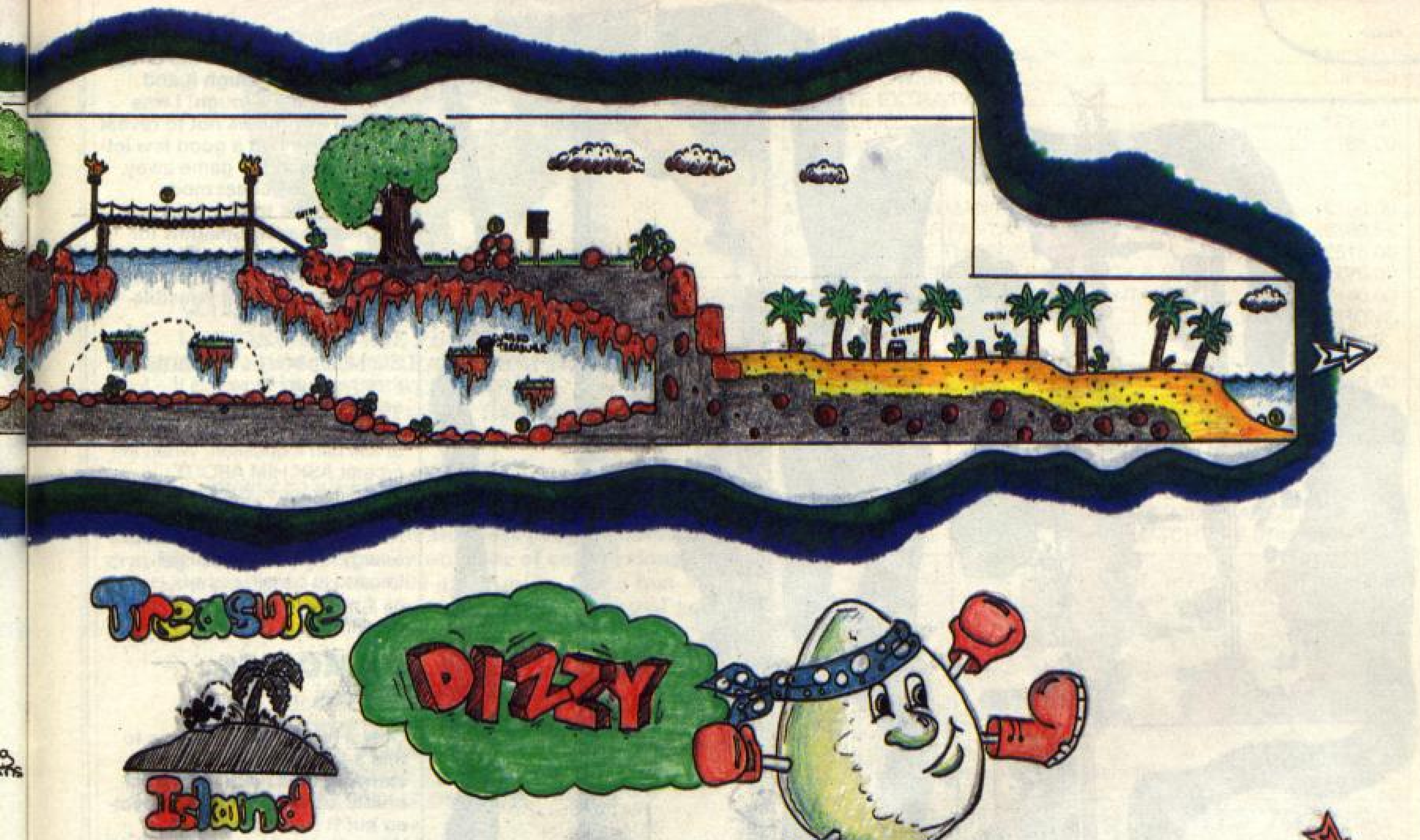


TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY SOLUTION

From the start: walk left, pick up the OLD EMPTY CHEST, place this next to the large rock face. You can't jump up, you can now stand on the chest and proceed upwards. Make your way across the bridge (beware of the torches) and to the tree-house complex. This is too complicated to describe so use the map to locate these objects: The GLASS SWORD, the VIDEO CAMERA and the SNORKEL.

Take these back to the beach where you started. Leave the video camera and the glass sword on the beach. Have the snorkel at the bottom of the object list and jump into the sea. All the creatures will kill you on contact so beware. Get the SPADE and go back to the beach. First pick up the spade, then the glass sword, then the snorkel. Go into the sea again and find the WOBBLY ROCK. Wait for a gap in between the fish and the squiddy thing, then hit the rock with the spade. Ride the BUBBLE, then time your jump to miss the jelly fish. Climb up the rocks (avoiding the shoal of fish) to the second island.

Get the GOLDEN KEY from the jetty, then head back to the GRAVE (on the island you're on). Holding the snorkel and the golden key, tap on the grave with the glass sword and a hole will now appear. Drop into the shallow pool, then go right into the pirates hide-out. Jump over the barrels, avoiding the torch flames. Stand on the door disguised as half a



barrel, open this with the golden key. Take the MICRO-WAVE, then go back to the shallow pool.

Holding your snorkel, go left and pick up the TWO STICKS OF DYNAMITE, then jump over the rock and the crab. Ride the bubble again and go to the shopkeeper's hut, give him the microwave and he'll give you a BOAT. Drop the boat in the water of the jetty, but don't get on it just yet!!! Leave the dynamite, pick up the BIBLE and the AXE, then go back to the first island.

Stand on the bridge, holding the bible and the snorkel and cut a hole in the exact middle of the bridge with the axe. Explore the underwater caves, find the CURSED TREASURE (if you're not holding the bible, you'll get struck by lightning).

Go to the second island again, give the shopkeeper the cursed treasure and he'll give you a MOTOR. Add this to the boat and you can now get rid of the bible. Pick up the dynamite and go back to the first island.

Find the INFRA-RED DETECTOR in the tree-house complex then go to the BLOCKAGE in the mines. Stand back and push the PLUNGER on the DETONATOR. You can now get the bag of GOLD COINS. Go back to the beach and pick up the VIDEO CAMERA and go to the shopkeeper. He'll give you an IGNITION KEY and some PETROL in return for the video camera and the gold coins. Add these to the boat and jump on when it's moving and keep walking on the boat until you arrive at the harbour. Jump off the boat onto the har-



bour and you've done it!!! (Phew!!)

Dizzy Note: A little additional tip from **Marc *Dizzy Mad* Doe** of Plymouth for *Fantasy World Dizzy* which can come in very handy for those of you trying to leap over the crocodile (which iswhat my solution suggested). You need the ROPE from Denzil to get this to work. Go and stand on the crocodile and then drop the rope which ties the croc's jaws together, stopping it from biting. Now you don't have to wait for him to snap twice before jumping, you can just jump!!! Nice one Marc!

SHADOW OF THE BEAST II

(Psygnosis)

During the reviewing of this so-so Amiga sequel to *Beast* we just HAD to have the cheat mode to get through it and even with it it's tough! I was told by Psygnosis not to reveal it but we've had a good few letters in giving the game away so here's the cheat mode. Many thanks to Peter McNally **of Drumchapel, Glasgow for being the first to send in the cheat!! Watch out for the complete solution (and possible map) next month!**

Start the game as normal and then head right towards the forest guarded by the natives. Run up to the first native and press A to ask him a question. When the prompt ASK HIM ABOUT WHAT? comes up, type in TEN PINTS (with a space) and press Return. You'll now have infinite energy, but you can still get trapped in certain corners (such as if you fall into the water and miss the last chance rope).

DAMOCLES

(Novagen)

Only a few of the solutions to this 3-D arcade-adventure extravaganza (with emphasis on the adventure) were expected but R Barrington **of Uttoxetter in Staffordshire first sent in two new solutions and then a third! Following up this was** Andrew Roberts **with a near complete list of all the objects in the game and their locations, I say near complete as I'm sure there's the odd object or two hidden away in the Dialis system but at last we have the solution to the Midas Puzzle and the secrets of the Author's House are exposed! Also many, many thanks to** Russell Neely **of Bristol for his list of objects in the game too. Ta!!**

SOLUTION NUMBER TWO

When you've got your vehicle and accepted the reward money (after pushing it up to 25 million credits) go to the Playtester Stores at 09-02, down to the basement and pick up the ANTI-GRAV. Now fly to a Trading Post and sell it. Fly to the Trading Post 13-15 and buy the BOOK OF WISHES there (costing 16,000 credits).

Fly to MIDAS (home to quite a few pyramids) and, instead of exploring each and every one, use tne six figure co-ordinates and go to 577-341, search around this area for a pyramid numbered in the following manner:
(Top Left Corner — 68/Top Right Corner 09)
(Bottom Left Corner — 20/Bottom Right Corner 33)

In that pyramid is the MAGIC ▶

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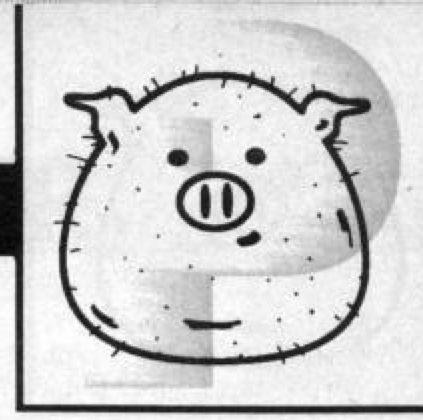
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PIG IN A POKE!



CRYSTAL which will grant you one wish (which The Order of Carpenters will undertake). Before you pick up the crystal use the BOOK by pressing Enter and look through it for the Wish you want, Save your game before making a wish as the crystal disappears after a Wish is made. Reload your position afterwards to try out the other Wishes.

The Cheese Sandwich Wish is useless and not even a graphic thrill when it appears, neither is the Wish for a more colourful universe (see Solution Number Three for a far better way to do this!). Saving Eris is an easy enough Wish while the saving Eris AND Damocles Wish is enacted by destroying Icarus as Damocles passes by causing Damocles to change course and avoid Eris (this is the most profitable solution too). The Wish for more time can be useful if you want to wander around and attempt to destroy Damocles via a more long winded route, but while you're here you might as well use the Save Eris And Damocles Wish and explore around afterwards.

SOLUTION NUMBER THREE

This must surely be the laziest solution yet!!

Undergo the usual procedure of collecting your Eagle 9SE ship (after accepting the task for saving ERIS for 25 million credits) and then head to BARE ISLAND — to Hantzen's Sales at 06-02, to be precise. Pick up the TIMED DETONATOR from the basement and get the EXPLOSIVES from Hantzen Laboratory at location 06-05 (just one is required but take a few more along for blowing up other things afterwards!).

Now fly to BIRMINGHAM ISLAND on DION and go to location 14-13 where you should spot Author's House (as Paul Woakes is something of an elusive fellow you'll have to search around to spot it). Go up to the door and you'll see that a KEY A is needed (which, surprise, surprise, doesn't exist). Where stealth and lock-picking doesn't work, a ton of explosive usually does the trick. Save your position beforehand in case things go wrong (invariably leading to your demise). Set the TIMED DETONATOR to a power rating of 3 and set the timer to 15/20 seconds or so, select an EXPLOSIVE and arm it, now very, very quickly drop the explosive next to the door and RUN!!!

If you survive the blast then go back and you'll see the A on the doorway has been obscured and you can go inside (if you didn't survive the blast then why are you reading this bit? Go away Zombie!). Look around the rooms and you'll eventually find a few items belonging to the Author, (the AUTHOR'S CHAIR, the AUTHOR'S DESK and the AUTHOR'S COMPUTER complete with 'tilting horizon' demo). Seeing as the great Author isn't around, just pinch all the items and take them outside (ignore the security warnings — mind you, the AUTHOR did *write* the very program that you're playing so watch out for possible retaliation!).

Go outside and board the AUTHOR'S CHAIR (which is actually the fastest spaceship in the entire game!) and now you can use the AUTHOR'S COMPUTER. Using the computer is the next best thing to being God in *Damocles* as you can now do all sorts of wonderful things from changing the status display colours to totally annihilating the entire solar system! The five parameters that can be changed using the computer are listed below. Use the + and - keys to cycle through the range and * to activate each parameter.

DAMOCLES HELP STILL WANTED!!!

Russell Neely and myself want to know if anyone knows where DOOR I is: there's a DOOR KEY I on BIRMINGHAM ISLAND at location 03-03 but no sign of a door!

Anyone know how to get past the invisible barriers in the pyramids on ACHERON?: there's one in the pyramid at location 01-01 where there's a COMMUCAT CONSOLE as well (anyone found a use for these?).

On THEON there are strange vector graphic Transmitters identical to the 'Strange Spaceship' from the original *Mercenary*. Anyone know what they're for?

Talking of *Mercenary*, has anyone found any use for *Mercenary* objects loaded into *Damocles* or any new solutions linked to the old *Mercenary* game?

AUTHOR'S COMPUTER PARAMETERS

Parameter	Initial Setting	Range	Effect
0	327	0-511	Gives you 512 different colour schemes for the universe — psychedelic, man!!
1	139	0-511	Gives you 512 different colour schemes for Benson's Status Panel.
2	008	0-10	Distorts the perspective and frame update of the universe and movement through it. Very weird!!
3	006	0-10	Slows down or speeds up the rate of time passage.
4	000	0-29	Destroys each planet and moons in the Solar System as well as the sun and Damocles itself. Damocles is item number 29 if you want to destroy it without totalling any others through trial and error!!

THE TIPSLINE IS BACK!

Yes, due to popular demand the tips hotline has been reintroduced. For all those latest tips and cheats that just missed going in this issue (and of course the Beast of Old Ludlow Town — the sequel! Coming soon to your phone!!!! — Rob H), simply pick up the phone and dial

0898 555083

Calls are charged at 44p per minute standard/peak (8am-6pm Mon-Fri), 33p off-peak (all other times, including Bank Holidays). So don't forget to ask your parents' permission first: otherwise a certain Little Bill will arrive at your home and cause trouble!

EMLYN HUGHES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

(Audiogenic)

An oldie but we keep getting tips in for this beaut of a soccer game on the C64. Daniel Excell **(nice surname Dan!) is here with a tipette and** H Fu **of Chesterfield provides some footie POKES.**

If you want to win a game all you have to do is: when you score, simply hold down on the Up Arrow key and the game finishes. The name of the scorer stays up on the screen when he scores. The players won't move but your time will keep going.

Alternatively try these POKES for a laugh and a half. (Again, you need a Reset Switch to implement these.)

Load the game and then press the reset switch on the MENUS SCREEN. Now type in these POKES for different results.

POKE 48044,1 — Skating Mode
POKE 48046,2

POKE 45343,32 — Titchy Players!

POKE 53521,x — (x can be in the range 0-15 to change the colour of the players' skin!)

POKE 53415,x — (x can be in the range 0-15 to change the colour of the players' hair and shorts)

With the above two POKES you can create streaker matches (if you're into that sort of thing), much like Phil did with the Amiga game which was about the best bit of that version.

To restart the game type SYS 2063. If the game looks corrupted then press RUN/STOP to return to the main menus screen. ▶

PIG IN A POKE!

LITTLE PUFF
(Cartoon Time)

Mrs G Smith **of Carlisle has been busy with the cute** *Little Puff* **from Cartoon Time and obviously enjoyed it too because here's the solution!! Keep them coming in Mrs Smith!**

Eat the CHERRIES and then go right and pick up the POTION. Now go left until you reach the TREE STUMP. Breathe fire on the stump and continue left. Jump down the hole and land on the left side. Walk left and jump onto the BOX, wait until the tortoise crawls past then walk off the box and pick it up. Go left again and drop the box close to the ledge. Jump on the box and collect the LIFE BELT. Collect the box on the way out. Go right until you see the CORKSCREW, pick it up and continue right. Jump over the hedgehog and collect the ENVELOPE. Go right and jump over the hole. Enter the next room and drop the corkscrew and pick up the FOOTPUMP.

Now go left and down the hole. Eat the HAMBURGER and then go left. Now jump in the water and you should be floating. Continue left until you reach dry land but be careful of falling eggs. Run between the worms and carry on left. Eat the GRAPES then jump over the hole and enter the HUT. Drop either the footpump or the life belt and pick up the HAMMER. The hammer and box should now make KEY 22. Pick up the object you dropped and walk over the door.Press UP twice and you should be inside the hut again, but this time the door is open. Make sure you have the life belt and foot pump before carrying on.

WARNING! SOFT OPTIONS

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Go left and drop down the hole, you should now be standing next to the corkscrew. Pick it up and go left and drop down the hole. Go back into the water and go left until you reach dry land. Keep going left until you reach the BANANA. Eat the banana and jump over the next hole, go left and enter the next room. Keep behind the hedgehog, enter the hut, drop the footpump and pick up the BOTTLE from under the LAMPSHADE. The bottle and the corkscrew should make up the second piece of PASS. Pick up the footpump as you need this once more.

Go right, jump over the hedgehog and then jump over the next hole. Continue right until the next hole and then go down, go left and drop down the hole. Pick up the TIN HAT and go left, go across the water again and continue left until you reach the first hole. Go over the hole and enter the hut, walk into the door and press UP once.

You should now be standing outside the hut: go left until you reach the hole, jump over and continue left. Walk under the COCONUT and it should fall down. Pick it up and the ENVELOPE. Drop the tin hat and make sure you still have your footpump and life belt. Go right until you reach the box with the arrow pointing up on it. Jump on the box and wait for it to sink to the ground and then drop the coconut on it. Go left until you reach the hut, walk on to it and press UP once: you should be inside the hut.

Go left and jump over the next two holes, go left. Walk behind the hedgehog and keep going left until you see the envelope. Eat the APPLE and pick up the envelope, go right until you reach the hut with the door. Walk over the door and press UP once; now go right until you see the coconut. Pick it up and continue right.

The LARGE DRAGON has taken your pass and disappeared. Drop the life belt and footpump and keep going right until you reach the SAW, now pick up the saw. The saw and the coconut make a GOLD COIN. Go right and you should meet another LARGE DRAGON saying 'Troll'. Drop the coin as near as possible to the dragon and he should disappear. Climb onto the bridge and go right. Jump over the holes but be careful not to jump into the HORNET or the SEA SERPENT (that would never do at this late stage!). Continue right until you see the message 'Home Sweet Home'. Enter the hut and read the message!! Congrats!

And if you're still having problems then try this set of POKES for *Little Puff* courtesy of Casey Quinlan **from Reading. You need a Reset Switch/Reset Cartridge to get this one to work though.**

1. Load up the game as usual.
2. Press the Reset Switch
3. Enter the following POKES and the SYS number and the game should begin again but the collision detection will have been disabled. Watch out as you can still die by falling in the water or if you fall onto spears.

POKE 40099,169
POKE 40100,0
POKE 40101,234
POKE 39827,169
POKE 39828,0
POKE 39829,234
POKE 40361,169
POKE 40362,0
POKE 40363,234

SYS 14848

SHADOW WARRIORS
(Ocean)

Handy tips for the Amiga version of Ocean's very pretty coin-op conversion thanks to Richard 'Boz' Procter **from Ewell, Surrey.**

Right, first of all, the best moves to use on the guys wearing blue jeans and red tops are the triple blow combination. For all the blue ninja people, use flying neck throws. Always throw baddies into objects and collect the item that is revealed, time is the most vital of all objects to collect. Benches are very useful for killing baddies with. What you do is either Phoenix backflip onto them or jump onto them (the benches, not the baddies) and then move your character so he is on the bar nearest you. Now it is ridiculously easy to beat the baddies up. Simply aim in their direction and hold down fire to do a triple blow combination. You can hit them, but they can't hit you!

For the next 'cheat' you need two joysticks (or a quick hand). Plug one into port 1 and the other into port 2. Play as normal as the blue Shadow Warrior and when you have just one block of health left on your last life simply press 2 and continue with the other person using the other joystick. When this person is about to die, get the other person to join in. This way, you will have 15 lives, without having to start at the beginning of the level when you die.

The easy way to get any end of level boss is to simply stand still on the screen and wait for him to come at you. Walk up the screen whilst walking in his direction, then walk diagonally down so you are standing on top of him. Now, he cannot hit or kick you but you can neck-throw him. Finally, while you are tight rope walking, particularly on level one, run towards the baddy that comes at you and at the last moment do a Phoenix backflip. If you do it at the right time you will harmlessly jump over him, so you will not get knocked off. Although this seems like chicken tactics, it will always work and you will never get knocked off.

Oh yes, if you are having trouble pressing S to turn off the music, this is because it is a misprint. Instead, press F2 on the title screen to get the excellent sampled sound effects during the game.

A quick one from Gav Huck **and** Andrew Conn **of Plymouth for the Amiga version.**

While playing in two-player mode, play until you have one credit left, and then on the Continue Play screen with the chainsaw just hold down keys 1 and 2 until the 'INSERT OTHER DISK' message appears. You should now start the game and you'll have infinite lives and credits!

SOUND OF MUSIC

Some extra samples for use with the Jon Barry Sampler program from Issue 65 thanks to Kevin Tett **of Weymouth, Dorset and Irishman** Iain Black **of Dublin. Any more brilliant samples out there?**

DOUBLE DRAGON 2 (End screen)

SAMPLE	L	H
'The End'	128	148
PIANO	149	188

Speed = 20 — NORM

FERRARI FORMULA ONE (Title Screen)

SAMPLE	L	H
'Gentlemen, start your engines'	132	166

Speed = 20 — NORM

Try adding the following lines to the BEATBOX program by Jon Barry for clearer samples.

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55 POKE 53265, PEEK (53265) OR 16

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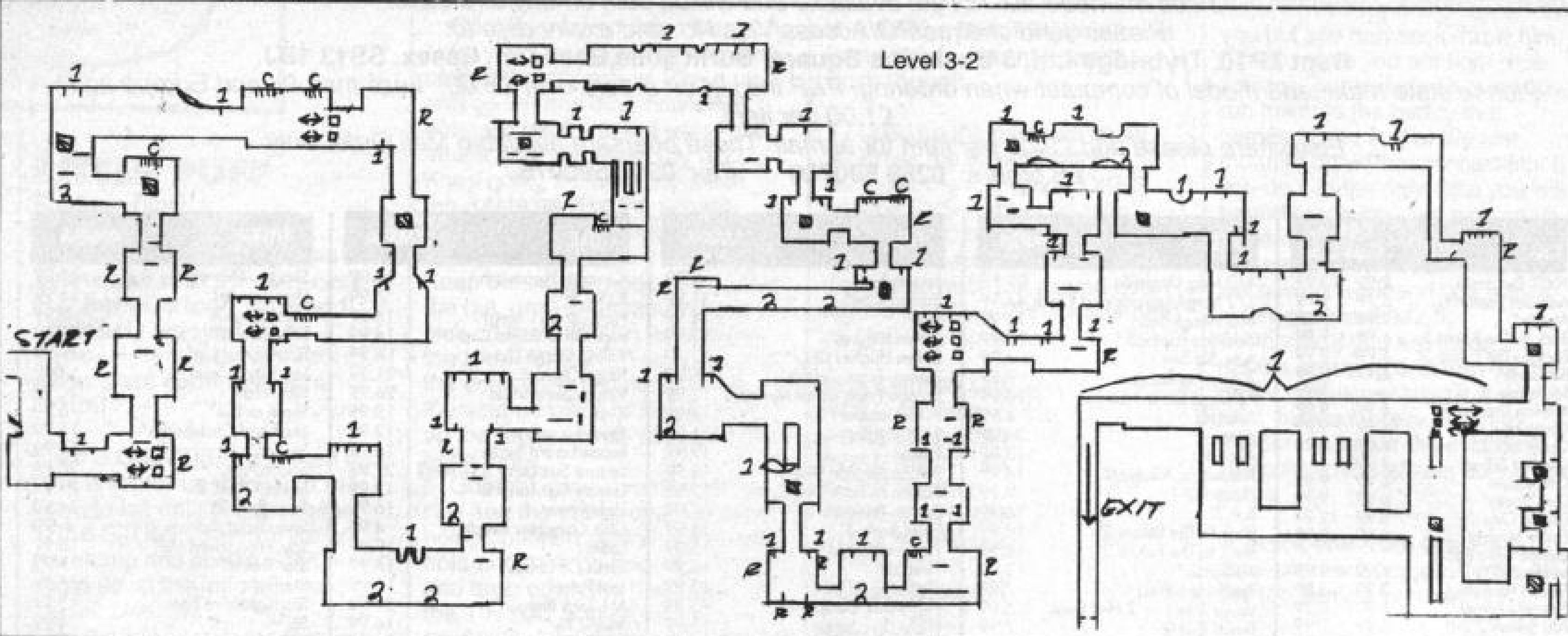
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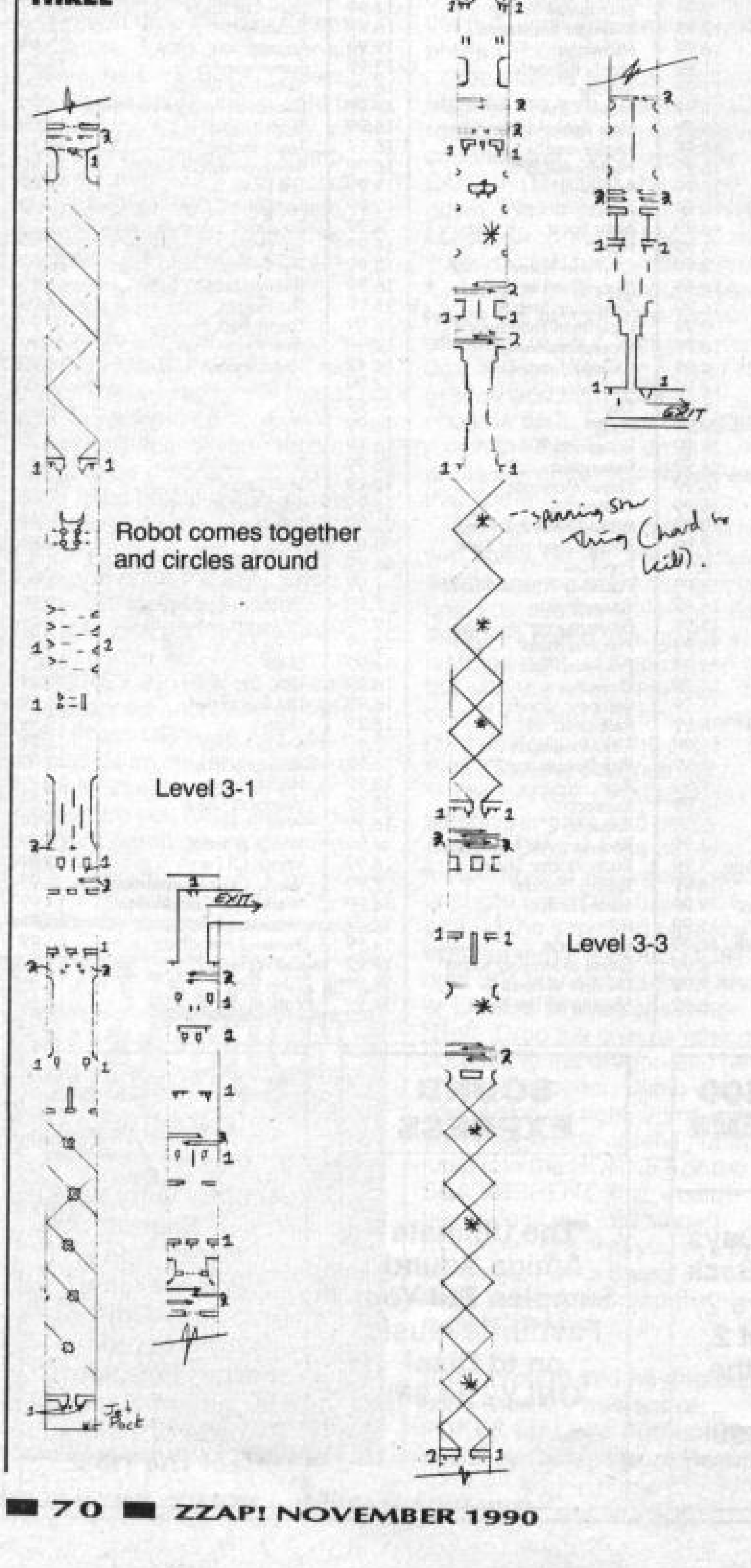
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TURRICAN — WORLD THREE



TURRICAN
(Rainbow Arts)

Not much space this time round means I can't detail World 4 so here we are with the vertical action of World 3 (great music on the C64 version, brilliant on the Amiga).

Level 3-1/Level 3-2

These tips apply to both levels. Run over to the right and use the lightning to reveal the jet pack. Walk onto it and get ready for the ride of your life!

It's best to hang back when you're passing the *Salamander*-style static spaceships (the ones with diagonal supports coming out of them): this allows you time to spot the aliens running along the supports and blast them — try to stay underneath any you shoot as the 1-UP lives fall off the screen rather quickly. When you come to the barriers you can move up into them and blast them without losing too much energy; keep pushing up and keep blasting to get through them. Learn the formations of aliens and keep to a corner when the big robot comes together mid-way through level 3-1. You can't destroy the main downward-firing lasers at the end of the level so just nip past them.

On level 3-3 the Spinning Stars are hard to kill, mainly because of their speed spinning round the player (lasers are recommended). Things are a little tougher as you've got to cope with going downwards to escape the world.

Level 3-2

This isn't the toughest of levels but it sure comes close if you start to cock things up or miss the power-ups! This level is MASSIVE and takes a lot of exploration, you can't really take a wrong route through the level as there aren't any dead ends. Take your time and use the mines to kill the 'Face Hugger' aliens and use that lightning bolt to spin round the enclosed rooms. There's plenty of hidden blocks around, revealing loads of extra 1-UPs and power ups. At the end you have to jump across a few large gaps to get to the long downward shaft. If you miss a jump you fall down into a dead end and have to run over to the right to jump up again to the start of the gaps again. This can be frustrating if you're not too good at timing your jumps.

This is the end of my lot this month but more goodies are promised next month and hopefully a good few pages more. There's a nice map of *Ruff 'N' Ready* to go in next ish and some *Flimbo's Quest*, *Damocles* comes to an end (hopefully). If *Golden Axe* is out by next ish then tips are *definitely* in demand. I may get round to finishing off *E-Motion* soon, and *Rainbow Islands* (I need a cheat desperately! Help!).

This month Simon Yarde gets the £30 software voucher for the simply beautiful *Treasure Island Dizzy* map — ever thought about being a graphic artist, Simon?? The address for all things tippish is *Newsfield, Pig in a Poke, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW. Until next month, adieu!!*

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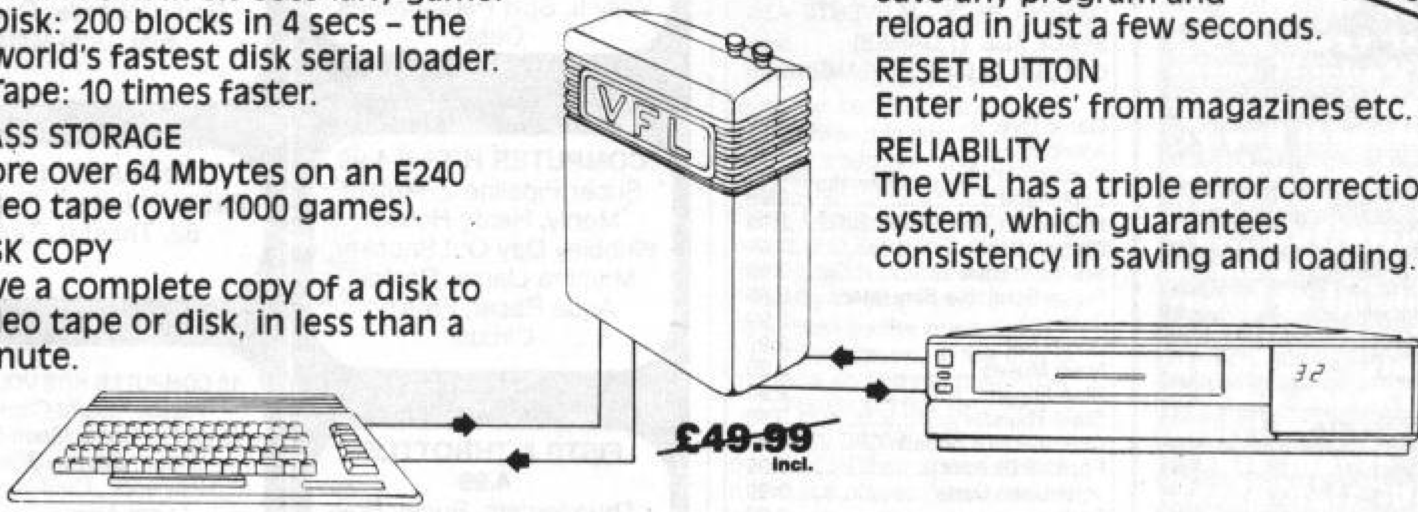
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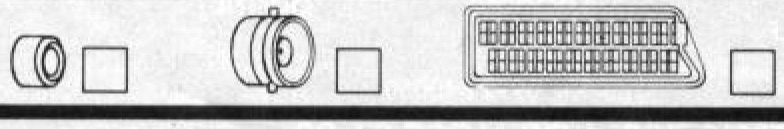
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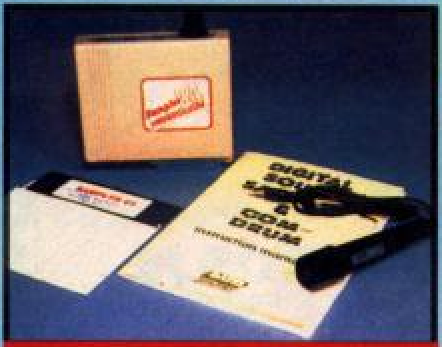
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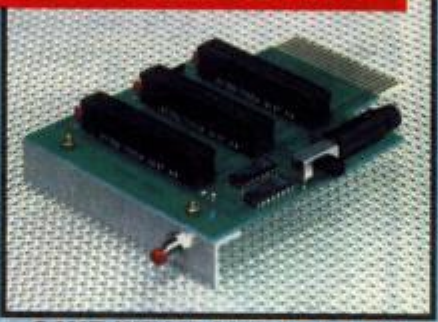


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THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Get exercising those eyebrows! Roger Moore is back as James Bond in the 1977 movie. Once again 007 — licensed to kill and do raunchy things with as many women as possible — has to thwart the plans of a megalomaniac and save the world. This particular villain, Karl Stromberg, has an aquatic bent. He's captured two submarines, and intends to use them to nuke Moscow and New York. WWIII will result, leaving Stromberg's undersea empire to rule the world. 007 has been called in to foil the villain, aided by Anya Amasova, a glamorous Soviet agent. They take to the road for the opening 'scenes' (levels) of the journey in the ultimate Q-mobile.

Steering the Lotus through vertically scrolling roads, a slender map gives advance warning of obstacles. Traffic cones present no problem but water patches slow you down, oil spins the Lotus and knocking down pedestrians costs 50 points! 'Q' tiles line the route, collected for later use. The Lotus transforms into a speedboat halfway through scene one, where jetties, mooring posts and aggressive boats have to be avoided. Back on dry land for the next scene: heavily-armed vehicles hinder progress but Q's van is at hand, lowering a ramp for you to board it. Weapons can be bought using collected 'Q' tiles: lasers, smoke screens, armour etc.

The most important device is the submersible upgrade, necessary for the next scene — a vertical-scrolling shoot-'em-up. Divers and subs attack the converted Lotus as it approaches Stromberg's base. Once there, gameplay switches to a single-screen *Op Wolf*-style shoot-out. Bond slowly makes his way across a gantry to plant a bomb but Stromberg's men have other ideas; you take control of Anya's gunsight to shoot them.

More watery vertical action, this time on jet skis, as Bond pursues the sub Stromberg and his henchman, Jaws, escape in. Once on board, you look down one of the sub's corridors while Stromberg's men appear from doorways. Shoot them and shortly, Jaws and Stromberg appear, holding Anya hostage. Maim the bad guys and save the girl otherwise the world won't be a nice place and you won't have anyone to go to bed with tonight!



Good old Jimmy Bond, you can depend on him to save the day while getting the girl and keeping his cool. It's a shame the same can't be said about myself! Weaving along the road like a mad man, spreading cones all over the shop, crippling unsuspecting pedestrians, trashing Lotuses left, right and centre...! My performance on water wasn't any better but I had a great time trying to improve it. *Spy's* six levels are nothing original but all have at least reasonable playability with graphics and sound as polished as 007's flashy cars. Standard vertical shmup, static *Op Wolf* and, most distinctly, the souped-up *Spy Hunter* of scene two all come together to make a busy, worthwhile package. Clever, Mr Bond.

★ Inside Stromberg's base you must shoot the enemies to make sure the explosive at the top gets to the blast doors.



★ Level three sees an underwater battle far more spectacular than the movie, with a massive submarine and end-of-level base to destroy.





Spy is probably the most accurate movie conversion yet, capturing a huge chunk of the plot and — most importantly — the spirit. The Lotus scenes in particular boast some very impressive graphics which superbly recreate that brilliant chase scene. There's even the motorcycle with its missile sidecar, although the *Spyhunter*-style Q-van is a welcome Domark addition providing plenty of add-on gizmos. The underwater section is even better, with masses of divers, mini-subs and diving bells — plus one mega-hard big sub and Stromberg's heavily defended base. The *Op Wolf* scenes add some vital variety, and overall this is my favourite Bond conversion yet. The only drawback is the repetition of playing through the early scenes, but currently Domark well deserve their licence to kill and thrill. Heartily recommended.

VERSION UPDATE

C64 cassette/disk versions reviewed next issue. A cartridge version is planned.

PRESENTATION 82%
Text briefing for each scene and demo mode showing each level. Disappointing gun barrel intro, however.

GRAPHICS 85%
Smooth scrolling, colourful, highly detailed backgrounds and compact sprites.

SOUND 80%
Amusing house mix of the Bond theme and a pleasing array of sampled effects.

HOOKABILITY 86%
The driving of opening levels is simple yet immediately enjoyable.

LASTABILITY 78%
Two driving, two shoot-out and two vertical shoot-'em-up levels are enough to keep the most skilled of agents busy, although having to repeat earlier scenes can irritate.

OVERALL 82%

Another challenging, enjoyable movie translation from Domark.



● Psygnosis, Amiga £34.95

SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2

The plight of your family makes the Simpsons look cosy. I mean first there was that unfortunate incident where you were kidnapped and turned into a beast-messenger by Maletoth, the Beast Lord. Years of mindless servitude ended only when you saw your father sacrificed to Maletoth. This broke the spell which had controlled you, freeing you to confront the forces of darkness. Using your beast powers you fought through dozens of monsters and traps to defeat Zelek, the Beast Mage. Your victory returned you to humanoid form and calmed your blood rage.

Zelek's defeat has put him on the edge of death, and he knows he must be successful in his next task for Maletoth — finding your replacement. He searches long and hard before finding your mother, and her newborn baby girl. Zelek instantly transforms into his beast form — a hideous monster with huge leathery wings. A short flight takes him to their cottage where he smashes through the roof to snatch the infant.

Your grief-stricken mother soon passes the news to you, filling you with undeserved guilt — and an unstoppable drive to save the child. All your money is spent on buying passage to Kara Moon on Tragon, an incredibly dangerous place now occupied by Zelek and his minions. Armed only with a mace, you step fearlessly into the massive trap Zelek has set for you. To rescue your sister you must find Zelek and defeat him.

Beast 2 follows the basic format of *Beast* — a multi-directional scrolling arcade-adventure — but with numerous enhancements and differences. You can collect gold to buy weapons or food (restoring energy). You can also interact with other characters. Press 'O' to offer an object to someone and press 'A' to ask about an object or character (you can input text here!).

★ A pity about the sky, but the foreground graphics are excellent



Beast 2 makes no compromises for anyone who found the original difficult: once again a few careless moves sees your single life crumble into bonemeal. This is irksome for reviewers, but for people who want their £35 to stretch over weeks not hours it might be more welcome. Certainly the more you play, the more apparent the attack patterns become so the impossible becomes plausible. The sheer variety of creatures, from massive humanoids to nicely animated leaping blobs, is obviously one of the main attractions of *Beast 2*. The famous, multi-layered background scroll has been sacrificed to allow much more detail in these and they're very impressive indeed. And this time interaction isn't limited to punching — the text input provides plenty of opportunity for intricate puzzles and an intriguing storyline. There's also plenty of switches to throw so if you fancy an beautiful-looking arcade adventure requiring pixel-perfect leaps and combat, this fits the bill. It isn't as compulsively playable as say *Blood Money*, but it's a more open-ended game: you have no idea what will happen next — another monster attack, or a priest wanting to talk.



This must be one of the most frustrating games ever, it's so flippin' difficult. My goes lasted no longer than a couple of minutes. Even with an infinite energy cheat the game is hard enough and totally merciless to any mistakes, like doing tasks in slightly the wrong order. Some of the puzzles are quite clever and, with hindsight, logical, but the basic game content resembles a simple, linear adventure with some very testing beat-'em-up action thrown in to make things harder. Superlative, imaginative graphics and a stunning soundtrack create a good atmosphere but even they can't quite make up for the overall lack of depth and ridiculously high difficulty level.



PRESENTATION 85%
'Free', *Beast II* T-shirt, great intro mixing text and cinematic scenes, good death pic (which can be turned off to save time).

GRAPHICS 85%
A great variety of imaginative creatures, superbly animated and detailed. But there's nothing to gasp over here as you did over the original's parallax scroll.

SOUND 88%
A subtly rousing soundtrack, impressive and changing according to circumstance. Great death-sequence guitar solo.

HOOKABILITY 73%
Very difficult, just one life and limited energy mean you're soon waiting for it to reload the beginning.

LASTABILITY 69%
A fair-sized quest, with some very neat puzzles, is made virtually impossible by fiendish difficulty.

OVERALL 72%

Not as graphically awesome as the original, while improved game structure is hampered by stupid difficulty level. But Psygnosis still show off the Amiga better than almost anyone else.



★ A rather large maggot squirms its way toward you in the main chamber.

● **Imageworks, Amiga £24.99**

CADAVER

Wulf castle, a murky, mysterious place, devoid of human life except for a vile necromancer, Dianos. Killer of King Wulf, it is said he abducts villagers for use in his black magic rituals. Karadoc the dwarf has been hired to find and kill Dianos, taking any treasure he finds as payment.

Cadaver **is a flickscreen, isometric 3-D arcade adventure with five levels of 70 screens, filled with objects, unsavoury creatures and treacherous traps. Objects are divided into a number of categories and when touched bring up icons in the lower left of the screen. The least you can do is search something (with a second icon to return you to walk around mode) and the maximum is five actions. Depending on the object, these actions include drink, read, open and give.**

Food and water (held in barrels) are essential to restore energy lost from contact with creatures and the poisonous swamp water. Potion bottles often don't specify what ability/disability they give the consumer so they're quite a gamble. Scrolls give useful information or hold spells for use against adversaries or at certain locations. Tools, armour and weapons have more conventional functions and all objects are accessed via a 'rucksack inventory'.

The castle holds many puzzles, solved using objects, spells, buttons and levers — the latter usually unlocking doors — and through interaction with castle inhabitants (some *are* friendly!).

As the castle's explored it's automatically mapped. The map shows rooms entered, highlights Karadoc's current location, and can be scrolled around and zoomed in on. The game position can be saved and loaded with appropriate spells, a gold fee (increasing with the level) required for saving.



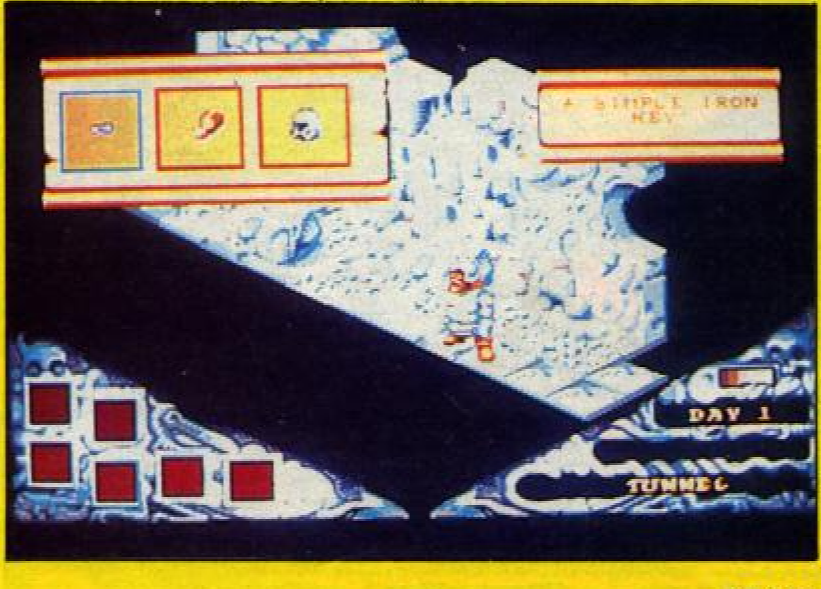
I thought the Bitmap Bros would inject some speedy action to the isometric aardvark format but it's the usual 'explore, collect and use' affair, albeit on a more complex level than games it's inspired by. It isn't easy, partly because too much emphasis has been put on the icons — you have to highlight one to do virtually anything and, on the default control setting, it's only too easy to accidently bring them into use. As for the puzzles themselves... well, I've never been any good at this type of game and although I've had plenty of theories of what should be done and where, my success in *Cadaver* has been limited. This is partly due to the odd way certain objects are used — *throw* a pick to break a wall down for example. Nevertheless this is certainly the largest and most sophisticated isometric aardvark yet. Anyone prepared to sit back and think awhile should find *Cadaver* highly rewarding.



The Bitmap Bros have effectively grafted an adventure interface onto a traditional isometric 3-D arcade game. A massive inventory, loads of puzzles and a profusion of commands from drink to pull lever to fight. The need to explore and examine everything puts *Cadaver* in a different league from games such as *Treasure Trap* — pushing a few crates around won't get you far here. This really is an arcade *adventure*.

Thankfully the icon system works well, with the icons usually quite obvious in their meaning, and the way they appear only when necessary means the control system is never too unwieldy. After only a short while puzzles are being solved quite easily. This draws you into the game which gradually gets harder and, with five levels and approximately 350 rooms, dwarfs previous isometric games. All in all, a very impressive departure for the Bros which should keep gamesters occupied for ages.

★ You haven't got far yet — the more objects you pick up the bigger the inventory display.



PRESENTATION 80%
Load/save option (although you do need spells to access them) and useful automatic map.

GRAPHICS 90%
Carefully drawn and beautifully shaded rooms and sprites, excellent use of colour but iffy animation.

SOUND 78%
A wide range of unusual, effective samples — although it's rather odd hearing a maggot scream!

HOOKABILITY 74%
Over-use of icons and dull opening locations can be highly off-putting but the exploration bug redresses the balance.

LASTABILITY 92%
Masses of locations, objects and puzzles to feed your arcade adventure appetite if you're willing to persevere.

OVERALL 86%
A remarkably laid-back, brain-biased Bitmap Brothers creation but one with plenty of staying power.

● **Rainbow Arts, Amiga £19.99**

APPRENTICE

A mere four hundred years old? You're obviously far too young to be accepted into the Magician's Guild, I mean you've still got hair on your head — where would the Paul Daniels rug and magician's hat go? Pah! If you really want to be accepted, go and defeat Fumo the dragon. Since the beginning of time he's been killing magicians, stealing their spells to increase his own fiendish power. He rules a poisoned realm where not even the wisest and most powerful of the Guild's members have dared enter.

You dare?! Well, such foolishness, but we will help you. The Guildmasters will use their magic to hide special objects in the landscape. Boxes and money have been scattered around, the boxes you can push, carry and even throw to kill the numerous monsters. You can also use them to build steps, while fruit has been hidden which will show you the correct path to follow.

The realm does have some good people though: behind doors you will find Oracles which may offer hints, merchants to barter with and buy things from — you may even meet a princess! Some objects are contained in tunnels too small for you to fit in, so if you've got the correct spell you can activate a miniature magician to use. A candle shows how much time he has to run around, throw switches, cross platforms which would collapse under your weight and so on. Switches can explode obstacles for you. Other magic objects include balloons (to ride up on), fruit (points), coins, keys, blue containers (protect you from fire), leaves (fall slower and jump further), bombs, hearts (extra life), freeze icons and many more.

Wise use of these objects is vital if you are to progress through the seven worlds contained within the Dragon's Realm. The worlds include heaven and hell, and make up 17 levels leading the player directly to the end, with a further 17 hidden levels.



To be honest, these cutesy Japanese-style games rarely get me hooked: they're nice enough to play but this *Mario Bros*-type format has been done to death. Rainbow Arts previously did such a good job imitating the Nintendo stars they were sued (over *The Great Giana Sisters*). But *Apprentice* is jam-packed with extra stuff such as miniature magicians, explosives, springy boots and lethal crates to make some case for originality without looking or playing dramatically different. For *Mario* fans this is good news, and Rainbow Arts' predictably high production standards mean it all works very well indeed. The soundtrack is delightful, beautifully clear and superbly embellishing a simple tune. The graphics are neatly detailed albeit a touch dull — the mushrooms appear in every *Mario* clone it seems — but heaven is nice with clouds on rails. The familiar running about and leaping gameplay is nice as well, with all the extra features combining well with some good puzzles. I particularly liked the sweeping broom which throws crates back at you. At £20 there's little to complain about apart from the absence of new ideas. Worth a look as probably the best of recent *Mario* clones.

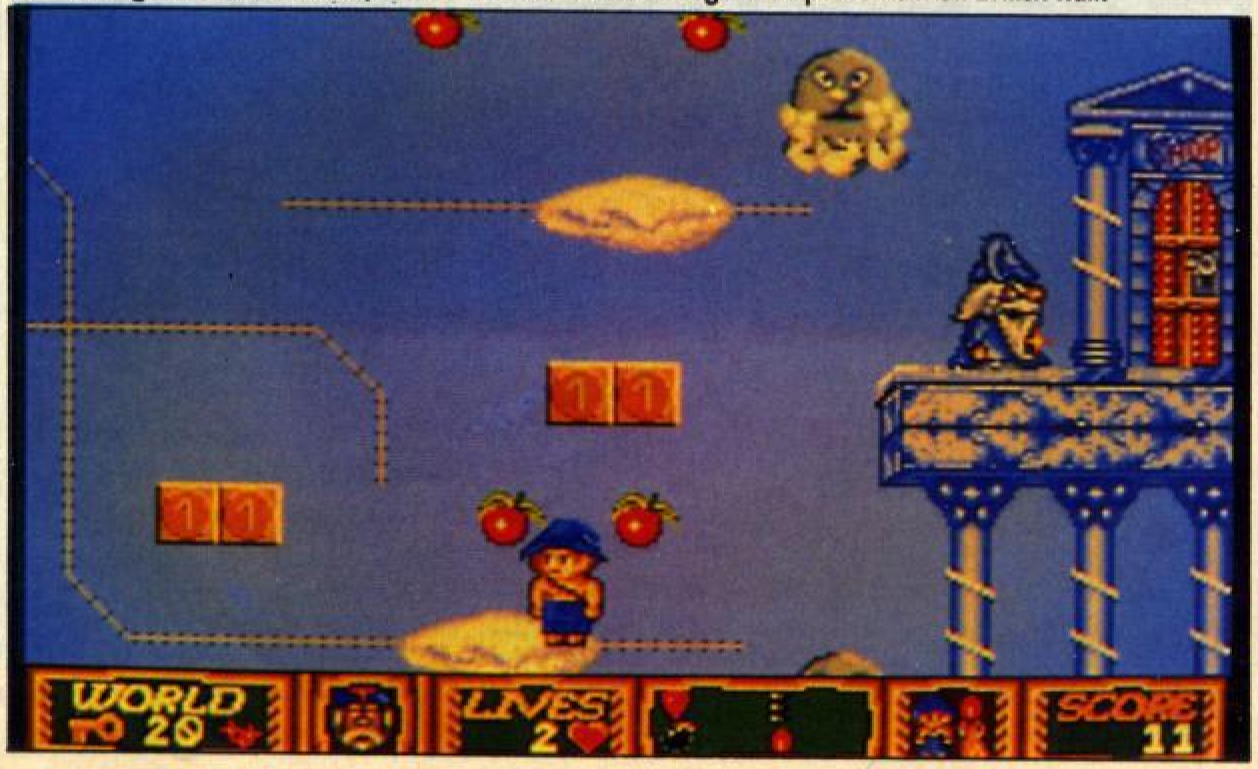
★ Loads of dosh, magic mushrooms and a shop on one of the 'earth' hidden levels.





Rainbow Arts! *Turrican*, woo! *Apprentice*... er... ah... After their highly innovative, top-notch blaster I expected something more than a middle-of-the-road cute platform game. Leap over sweet little animals and from ledge to ledge, collect fruit and tokens... yawn. Kicking crates around to destroy the said creatures is the most satisfying part of the game but soon begins to pall. Graphics are pleasant but uninteresting, music is well composed with some nice sounds. There are simply too many games of this type for *Apprentice* to stand out from the crowd.

★ Riding a cloud in heaven, the clouds follow rails — a great improvement on British Rail!



VERSION UPDATE
Strangely enough, no plans for a C64 version as yet.

PRESENTATION 68%
Standard *Turrican*-style opening, high score table and unobtrusive disk access.

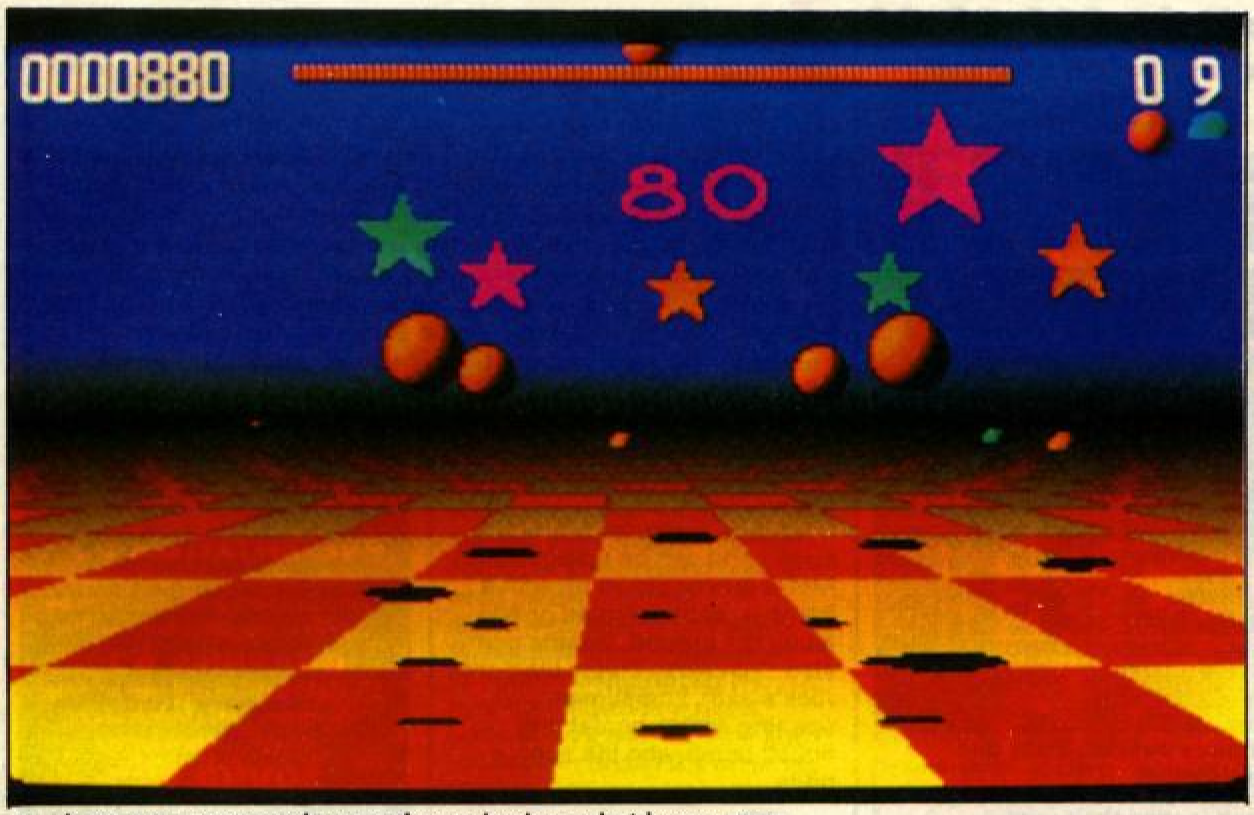
GRAPHICS 73%
Simplistic console style, but nicely detailed with some good imagination and variety.

SOUND 80%
Again simplistic console-style, but brilliantly embellished with crystal clear chimes and suchlike.

HOOKABILITY 77%
Couldn't be easier to get into, but lack of anything dramatically new restricts addiction.

LASTABILITY 80%
30-plus levels provide a substantial challenge with plenty to see and do. Hidden rooms, levels, a princess and more besides means this has plenty to keep you playing.

OVERALL 79%
Unoriginal, but well produced and very playable.



★ A star tree appears at the start of every level to replenish your ammo.

● US Gold, Amiga £24.95

VAXINE

Every day you come under attack from fearless enemy agents, attempting to destroy your defences and kill you! But this isn't some paranoid fantasy, it's all true and happening as you read this: the skin-crawling facts of your body's war against invading virus cells. Which isn't to say the inside of your body looks like a multi-directional scrolling playfield with ray-traced graphics, but merely that The Assembly Line have written a novel scenario for their *E-Motion* follow-up.

Another way of thinking about the game is as a 3-D *Defender*. You start off with nine dome-shaped bases to defend from three types of virus spheres (distinguished by colour) which bounce along the chequered floor. To attack, three or more like-coloured virus spheres must link together with elastic lines before adjoining a base.

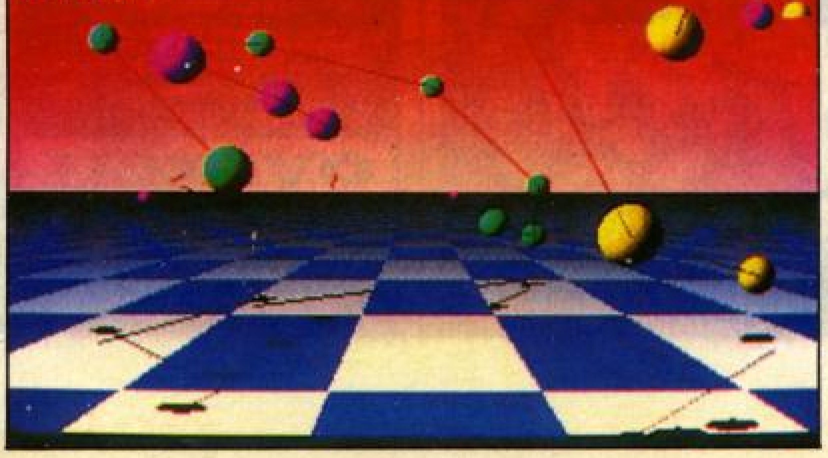
There are also two types of special virus cell. Hatchers consist of three different coloured spheres all linked together. When one is shot the Hatcher splits into lots of individual spheres. Spitters simply roam the grid throwing out spheres.

To fight back you have three different types of ammo: to destroy a sphere, shoot it with the matching ammo. This isn't as easy as it sounds with no targetting cursor and everything bouncing along at some speed. And if you run out of any type of ammo, or all your bases are destroyed, it's game over. To recharge your ammo, shoot a sphere with the wrong ammo. This creates a star which gives you 16 more shots, when hit with the same-coloured ammo.

In fact, at the start of each level there's a short pause before the enemy appears so you can top up your ammo using the star tree which appears. Much ammo is needed to create Trojan cells: strings of ammo which seek out virus cells and destroy them.

Another neat trick is provided by the Portals, black slabs which you can move through, freezing everything so you can move around unhindered. But once you press fire everything goes back into action at a slightly higher difficulty level. Fortunately at the beginning of each fifth wave all nine of your bases are restored. At the end of this wave there's a bonus 'Shooting Star' level with dozens of ammo stars swirling about.

★ Strings of Trojans automatically seek out virus cells.





I'm afraid *Vaxine* is nothing more than a glorified *Defender* variant. It all looks very nice with the super-fast, filled-in 3-D resembling something off a top-notch graphical demo. The trouble is that the gameplay is very weak, consisting merely of throwing out loads of little balls at other slightly bigger balls. With the balls multiplying at an alarming rate, the only way of controlling them is to send out incredibly long trojan strings which automatically do the job while you go and make a cup of tea. The only hint of tactics is in conserving ammo, but with ammo stars at the start of each level this isn't too difficult. A disappointing lack of variety on later levels doesn't help ease the overall repetitiveness.



After the intricate puzzles of such previous Assembly Line games as *E-Motion*, *Pipemania* and *Helter Skelter* it takes a while to grasp the simplicity of *Vaxine*. The heart of the game revolves around sending out loads of trojans while keeping a cautious eye on ammo. Hesitation is easily fatal, with virus cells rapidly multiplying unless you get them under control first. On the first ten levels a stream of trojans mean you don't even have to worry about Spitters. This gives you time to admire the superlative graphics — an incredible number of balls can appear on screen without the slightest slowing down. Sound isn't so amazing technically, but the various FX are distinctive. Unfortunately for all the quality this game oozes in production values, gameplay is a touch repetitive. According to the programmers the game began life as a technical experiment, and while it's certainly fun to play, the lack of variety is disappointing.

VERSION UPDATE
No plans for a C64 version.

PRESENTATION 80%
Attractive start-up, continue-plays and restart.

GRAPHICS 84%
Unique, ray-traced style is even more stunning here than in *E-Motion*. Limited variety however.

SOUND 81%
Informative and atmospheric FX.

HOOKABILITY 79%
Simplistic shoot-'em-up gameplay is soon grasped.

LASTABILITY 63%
90 levels promise only increased difficulty and different colours.

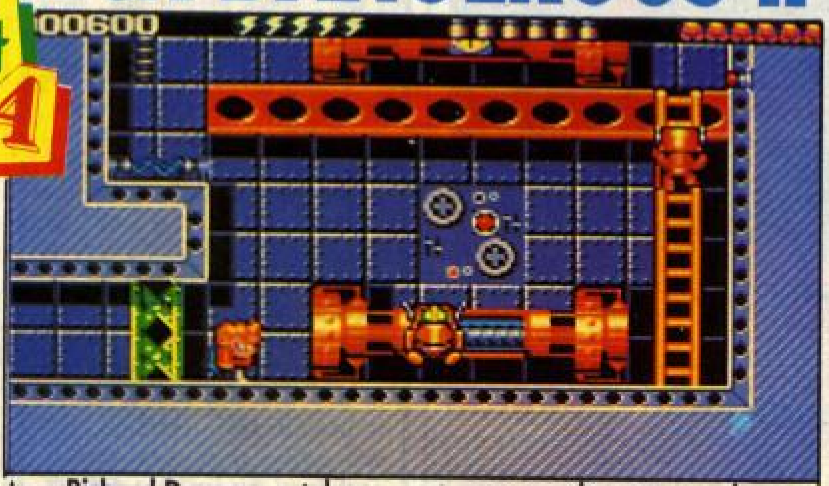
OVERALL 69%

Superbly programmed but repetitive.

● MicroStyle, C64 £9.99 cassette, £14.99 disk; Amiga £24.99

RICK DANGEROUS II

64 A



★ Richard Dangerous takes on yet more puzzles, traps and nasties aboard an alien starship. (Amiga)

The prat with the hat is back! Err, except this time he's lost his hat (hmph!), but then what do you expect from world famous explorer, sticky label collector and hopeless imbecile, Richard Dangerous?

To be fair, he's been having a pretty harrowing time of it lately. Immediately after returning from his Indiana Jones-style treasure hunt in the original *Rick* game, he found his native London invaded by aliens, the very same short, green and gruesome creatures he encountered at the end of his first computer adventure. Slipping into his flashy superhero costume, complete with flowing cape, he dashed to Hyde Park (tripping over his cape only two or three times in the process) where the aliens had landed their vast spaceship. Gritting his teeth and setting his jaw, he strode purposefully into the portable fortress, determined to right the wrongs the aliens had begun.

Even with his over-inflated ego near bursting point, Rick knew that single-handedly saving civilisation wouldn't be *quite* as easy as falling off a particularly slippery log. So he came prepared with a limited charge laser gun and a number of short-fuse bombs.

The UFO and the four levels which follow it are in the form of a scrolling maze, packed full of defence systems and booby traps. Initially, these are lasers and electrical sparks, some of which can be deactivated by a kick to the appropriate nearby switch. Switches can also move elevator platforms, giving access to new parts of the maze, but beware — some trigger booby traps.

Various creatures patrol the mazes and can be zzapped with Rick's gun or blown up with a bomb — either planted or slid along the ground. Bombs can also clear away crates blocking Rick's path, sometimes opening rooms containing bullet, bomb, and life supply pods.



We are the Dangerous Brothers! I am Warren Dangerous and this is the beautiful Sir Richard Dangerous! It's a shame this isn't as funny as the violent Channel 4 Friday Night Live duo, or even the original Rick game, which I'm very fond of. Different graphics and slideable bombs aren't enough to kid me this is anything more than Rick Dangerous +. The cutesy sprites, waving their arms madly as they fly out of the screen when killed, are fun if you haven't embarked on a *Rick* adventure before, otherwise, *yaawwwn*. Trap-dodgin', monster-zzappin' maze exploration is initially fun but ultimately repetitive — especially if you've played Mr Dangerous's first game.



Rick's not quite so funny second time around — I blame it on the lack of a hat, myself — and the sequel doesn't really make any advances over its predecessor. Ironically, it looks like MicroStyle have 'played it safe' with more of the same, admittedly very playable trap-dodging action which gets a tad monotonous once the novelty of the humour's worn off. Still, the cartoon graphics are pretty good — especially on the 64 — with some neat animation of the dashing hero and five very different-looking levels. If you loved the original then *Rick II* will undoubtedly keep you happy for a fair while.

64

PRESENTATION 83%
Mildly amusing text and graphics introduce each level, which can be played in any order, bar level five.

GRAPHICS 82%
Small but detailed and well animated characters stroll through bright, smooth scrolling levels.

SOUND 80%
Lively music and jingles and an array of excellent effects.

HOOKABILITY 88%
Traps are nasty from the start, causing many unexpected deaths, but sneaking past them and progressing that little bit further is satisfying.

LASTABILITY 68%
Free access to the first four levels but, when all's said and done, if you dodged a few traps and killed some aliens, you've pretty much done it all.

OVERALL 75%

Second time around, Rick's antics can still while away an hour or few but aren't as original or amusing any-more.

★ Rick discovers a secret room full of extra bombs and bullets. (C64)



amiga

PRESENTATION 85%
As for the C64 except with black-and-white mode, for that authentic *Flash Gordon* serial feel.

GRAPHICS 80%
Cartoon-like definition and animation, albeit in an ST-ish kind of way.

SOUND 83%
Pleasingly melodramatic music and quality vocal and mechanical sam-ples.

HOOKABILITY 87%
Blasting robots and figuring out how to elude traps instantly appeals.

LASTABILITY 67%
Different levels are merely different arrangements of adversaries, plat-forms, ladders, switches and traps.

OVERALL 74%

Rick's a fun chap to meet but can soon become boring.

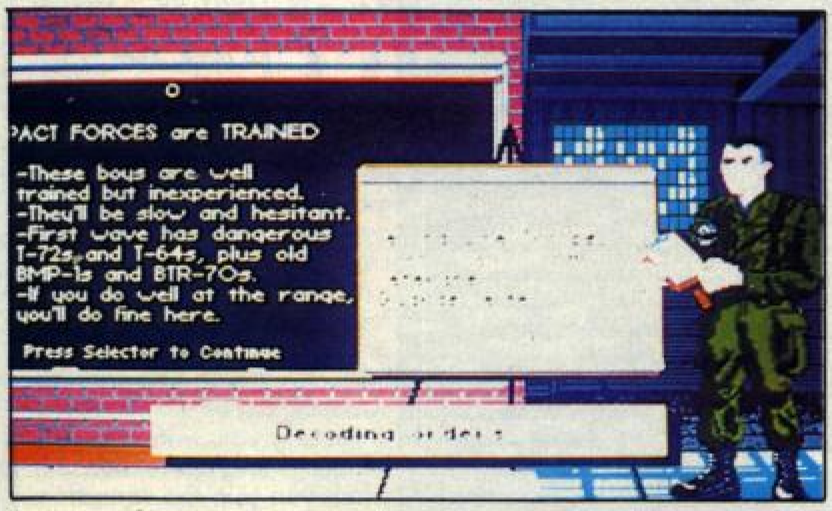
● **MicroProse, Amiga £29.99**

M1 TANK PLATOON

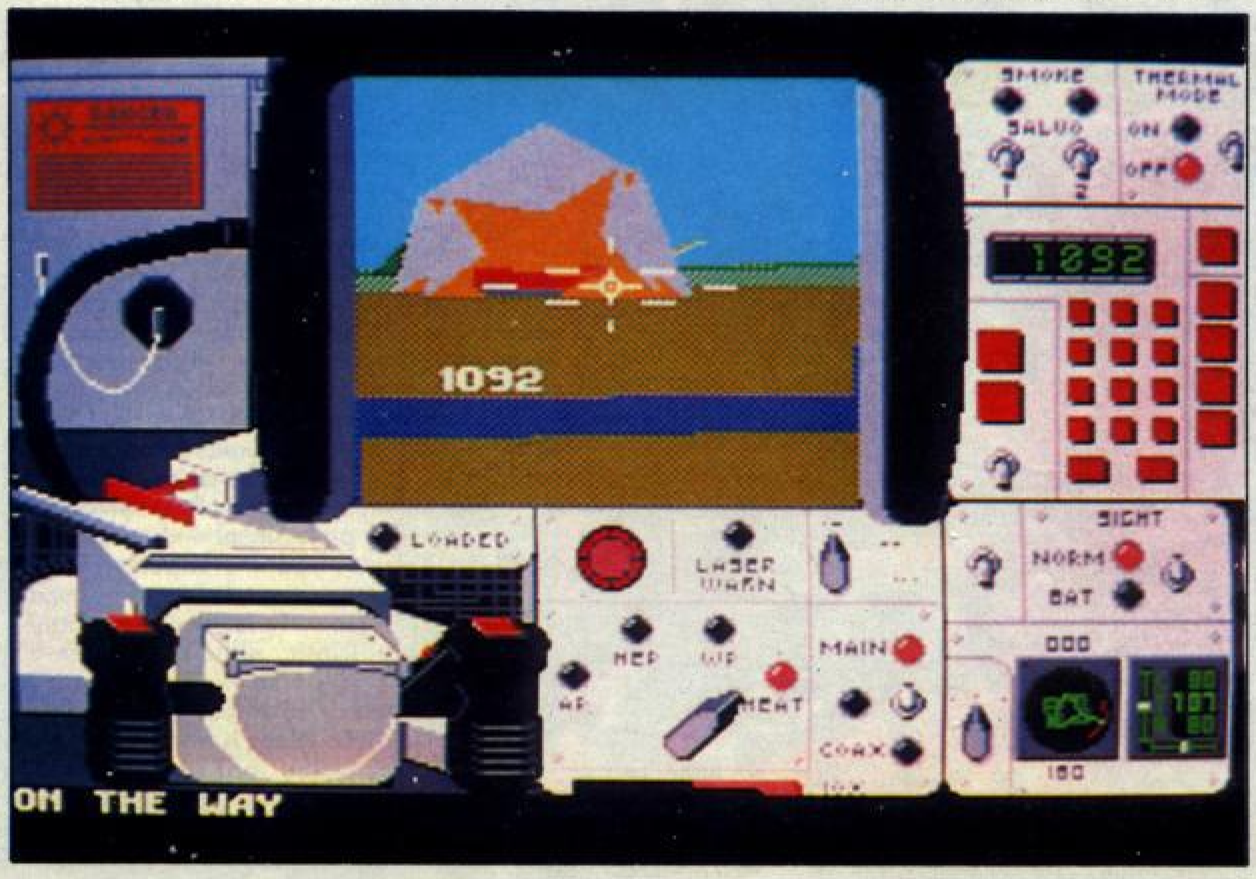
In MicroProse's latest sim you take command of four M1 Main Battle Tanks and a host of other infantry vehicles! With each tank having four positions to command, (two Tank Commander positions, a Driver and the all-important Gunner) things could get too complex without the automatic control. Using the battlefield map and mouse control, you can rapidly order either individual tanks or the whole platoon to go to a certain location, adopt a particular formation, turn on smoke, engage the enemy and a host of other Tank-relevant commands.

In theory you can control the entire battle from the comfort of home base but it does no harm to mix it up with the others. Indeed, the computer controlled M1s are pretty dumb initially, so if a battle's not going your way you can join in and even the odds, especially if you've practised on the training ranges or taken part in single conflicts. The briefing before each mission details objectives, enemy and allied forces and shows the terrain (randomly constructed each time for long-term appeal). Once you've been briefed and your crew chosen it's off to the battle!

★ A thorough briefing before each mission warns of upcoming dangers.



★ Michael scores a direct hit after just a few minutes play. Who said these MicroProse games were too complicated?



Through the main options screen you can take part in a number of situations: *Static Gunnery* (battle against passive, static tanks), *Moving Gunnery* (take on passive but fast moving targets), *Single Engagement* (one of six situations to choose from), *Start Campaign* (a full-blown war with up to 99 missions).

Alongside the M1s (depending on the mission) there can be infantry teams with anti-tank weapons and fast moving light attack vehicles to help on the ground, smoke and high explosive-launching artillery, and aerial support from A-10 attack aircraft, Scout helicopters and Apache gunships. Even with all this, things can go horribly wrong as the enemy gets a lot smarter with each new skill level.



ROBIN

Those of you expecting *F-29*-type graphics might be disappointed: the tanks are neat polygon shapes and it all runs very smoothly indeed, but graphic variety is limited and unspectacular. As with most MicroProse sims the excitement comes from the great sense of atmosphere, there's always plenty going on and you don't want to run into trouble too fast! What matters most is the attention to detail in the game design: the mouse-driven map works like a dream and the daunting task of leading four-plus fighting vehicles is easily mastered. Watching the fighting from the map is a highly engrossing occupation in itself; the vehicle orders system works really well (simply moving into attack positions is a demanding task). Joining in is even more fun and the perfect way to experience the claustrophobia of tank combat. It's a shame there isn't a wide variety of mission types other than the basic six on offer (minefields would have been a novel feature) but the higher skill levels are tough enough to ensure a very strong challenge.

Actually controlling the tank is surprisingly easy — the ultimate in automation — with only gunnery being particularly demanding. But the strategy of moving your mini-army about is difficult and highly engrossing. When the Russians start a full-blown assault you *really* do find yourself panicking! Top marks to MicroProse!

C64 UPDATE
There are no plans for a C64 version as yet.

PRESENTATION 94%
A wealth of options! Massive, informative and well presented 206-page manual. Four skill levels. External views. Keyboard overlay, Save/Load function. Slick, user-friendly mouse-driven map display, above average static screens.

GRAPHICS 68%
Exterior graphics lack detail and use bland colours, but are fast enough. Instrumentation is extremely detailed.

SOUND 60%
Teeth-grinding main tune, solid blast and explosion effects but let down by average tank movement sounds.

HOOKABILITY 86%
Not as complex as it first seems and thanks to the manual it's relatively easy and quick to get used to the systems. The highly accessible tank command/map display helps a lot.

LASTABILITY 89%
Doesn't have the mass of options and flexibility of *Stealth Fighter* but the generating of random maps with each new mission, a full blown Campaign option and five increasingly difficult skill levels ensures depth to keep you playing.

OVERALL 88%
Hasn't got the graphic thrills of *Stealth Fighter* but it's deep, demanding and well worth the money.

● Cinemaware/ Mirrorsoft, Amiga £29.99

WINGS



★ Tally-ho, the *Zaxxon*-style level and a tank has just been totalled!



★ The Squadron CO welcomes you into the club.

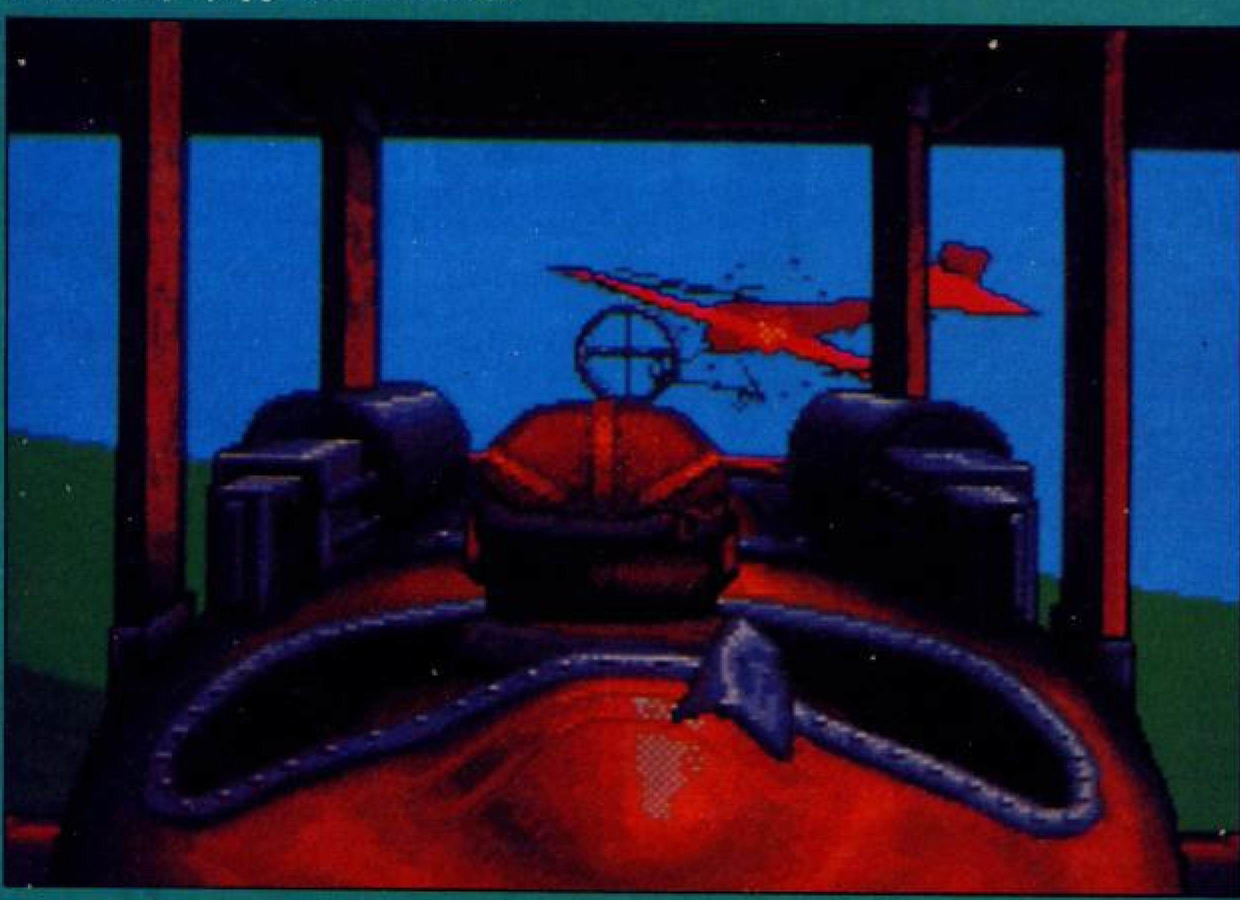
Not for you the slime and ignominy of the trenches, ratburgers for tea and mustard gas for cologne. Nope, you're an Allied fighter pilot, a glamour puss outfitted with a silk scarf and designer leather jacket. Your life expectancy may not be more than a few days, but you look good and that's all that matters.

But before you can experience that stylish going-down-in-flames death, you must complete flight school. First you must create your pilot by naming him and attributing a set number of ability points to four skills: flying, shooting, mechanical aptitude and stamina. Then you must successfully complete a training mission (strafing, bombing, or flying) to join the 56th Aerosquadron.

Once in the squadron, your Commanding Officer, Colonel Farrah, will give you the job of writing the squadron journal — a diary which often contains useful information about your next mission. There are three basic mission types: a *Zaxxon*-style strafing run, an overhead-view bombing run, and a 3-D aerial combat section. The first two have specified targets to destroy — a bridge, convoy, or even a moving train — while avoiding anti-aircraft fire.

Aerial combat missions include dogfighting with enemy planes (including Eindeckers and Fokkers), bursting enemy recon balloons, and protecting Allied bombers and balloons. For all these you're accompanied by one or more

★ Another high-flying game from Cinemaware.





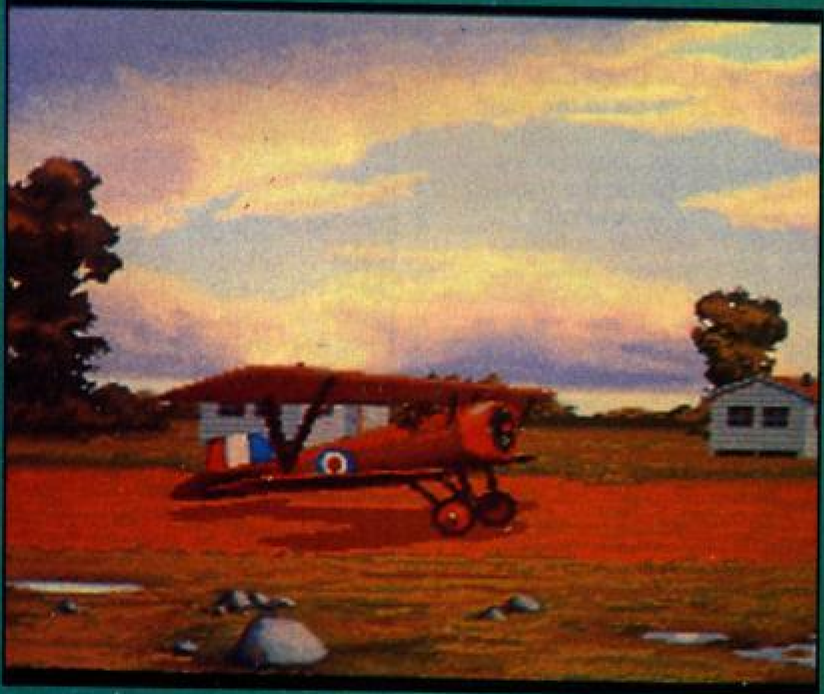
Tally-ho chaps! Bandits at six o'clock, zero bravo, etc! Yup, once again Cinemaware's highly polished presentation generates such a fantastic, authentic atmosphere that you can't help but get deeply involved in *Wings*. Mission briefings, reports, journal entries and more set the scenes brilliantly, though frequent disk-swopping can be a bind.

Earning your wings is easy but things toughen considerably when you join the squadron. *Zaxxon*esque strafing and *1942*-style bombing runs are a hectic mixture of dodging and hastily aimed and timed firing/bombing — sit still for more than a fraction of a second and you're in trouble. The dogfight flight sim (tongue-twister time!) is the *real* tester, however: I've embarked on many, many such missions but only scored one kill (embarrassing!)! Although the 3-D is a little slow and jerky, it's the dogfights which work best and generate most excitement, cries of *Kill the Fokkers!* resounding around the office!

Some of the sprites are pretty drab but generally graphics are as professional and true to life as you'd expect from Cinemaware, as are the sound effects. Tunes are pleasantly patriotic, although there's a terribly irritating accordion piece every so often. Minor faults aside, *Wings* is a varied biplane bonanza that any potential scourge of the skies should take the controls of.



For me, this beats all those ultra-serious flight sims into the ground. The old biplane may not have very sophisticated weaponry but its simple controls make it a joy to fly compared with complicated modern jets. Out of the mission types, dogfighting is the most fun with a neat sitting-behind-the-pilot viewpoint and intelligent enemy planes which roll and dive to avoid your fire (in over forty missions as 'The Yellow Baron' I only managed five kills). Even better is when an enemy sneaks up behind you, the viewpoint switching to behind both planes as you try and evade him. Though not as hectic, strafing and bombing sections are very playable with some nice graphics — especially the tiny, scampering infantrymen who take potshots at you! To cap it all, the squadron diary gives a fascinating narrative including humorous personal anecdotes as well as atmospheric details of 'current' historical events.



computer-controlled pilots. Your 'backseat' cockpit viewpoint shows the pilot's head turning to spot enemy planes — in addition you can look around using four external views. For such a basic biplane, controls are simple: bank left/right and pitch up/down — there's no speed control. Your only weapons are twin machine guns which have a tendency to jam every so often, leaving you a sitting duck! Like your enemies, you can take a number of hits before being downed. Sometimes you may be able to ditch your damaged plane and survive, though Colonel Farrah won't be too pleased — three warnings from him and you're thrown out of the force.

Back at base your performance is evaluated and the league table of pilots shown with number of missions flown and kills. Do well and you could win a medal or even promotion. However, your real aim is simply to survive 230 missions until the end of the war. If you die, your next pilot starts off at that date, so you can play through the war with a number of different pilots.

* The attractive take-off screen which begins each mission.

PRESENTATION 90%
Disk swapping a bit irritating, but slick inter-mission screens including the fascinating diary. Save option and effectively continue-plays with different pilots.

GRAPHICS 92%
The 3-D aerial combat section is the most impressive with a superb view of the pilot in his cockpit and excellently detailed planes.

SOUND 80%
A variety of period tunes, some of which can become irritating — shoot that accordion player! Plenty of good sound FX.

HOOKABILITY 89%
Your biplane is very easy to fly while the great atmosphere draws you into the game.

LASTABILITY 81%
Kills are quite hard to obtain and survival just as difficult. The 'continue-with-a-different-pilot' option avoids frustration. Maybe a tad repetitive in the long term.

OVERALL 83%

Highly enjoyable 'seat of your pants' flying.

• Psyclapse, £19.99

ANARCHY

Cities throughout the galaxy have been overrun by the Anarchists, a riotous crowd who use a variety of fashionable aircraft. There's nothing they like better than hiding car keys, putting glue on toilet seats and using their gravity-distorting devices to make bread fall buttered side down. And now, as disaster forms around them, they're stealing the life capsules that contain escaping VIPs.

You've been given the task of saving the capsules and blowing the Anarchists into small, manageable pieces. The cities are shown side-on, scrolling left and right — a radar display indicates the positions of ships and capsules. The various Anarchist craft — Stealers, Homers, Darters etc — are blasted with a laser and sometimes release a lettered token. When collected, they give weapons such as side-shots, force-field and outrider cannon.



Cor, what an original idea: it's a sort of poor (or rather stupid) man's *StarRay*! Where that game was full of slick graphics and superb sampled sound, *Anarchy* substitutes tiny, undetailed sprites and a naff rock title tune. The gameplay is inferior still, suffering from a lack of variety, especially in the dull enemies. I just can't understand why Psyclapse have bothered releasing such derivative drivel.





Hmm, our Psyclapse release schedule's looking a bit thin... I know, we'll get one of our programmers to knock up a Defender *variant, the kids'll go for that!* I've got nothing against the *Defender* concept, in fact it's one of my favourite oldie coin-ops, but this Amiga update of it is pretty much instantly unplayable. Graphics and sound are hopelessly outdated, gameplay is difficult from the start (you have to fire and hope for the best with the stupidly fast-moving Bouncers) and the transparent radar display is barely usable. For a slick *Defender* variant on the Amiga, go for Logotron's *StarRay*, otherwise dig out C64 *Dropzone*.

PRESENTATION 52%
Two skill levels, sound on/off. Grainy title and death screens.

GRAPHICS 55%
Drab, washed-out sprites and equally lifeless backdrops, although the multi-layer parallax scrolling is smooth and fast.

SOUND 50%
Mediocre Heavy Metal title music and simple, outdated effects.

HOOKABILITY 56%
Easily grasped but immediately uninspiring due to its outdatedness and difficulty.

LASTABILITY 27%
Evermore challenging attack waves but a total lack of variety.

OVERALL 37%

A 1990 remix of a classic (ancient) game that simply doesn't work.

● US Gold,
Amiga £24.95

OPERATION HARRIER

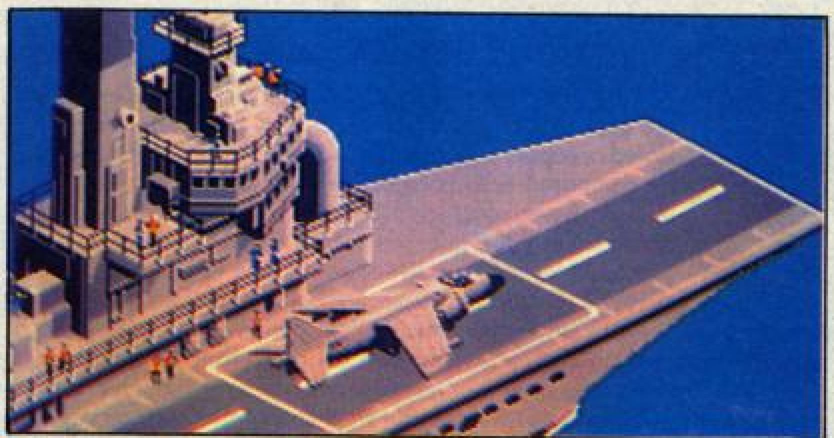
The Marines were among the first American troops into the Gulf, a scenario uncannily like *Op Harrier*'s tale of conflict between Middle East countries. The game is set in a fairly large warzone, with several islands and plenty of coastline. The Marines have arrived on an aircraft carrier armed with Harriers.

You begin your career as a Pilot Officer, but aim to rise through the ranks. To do this you must complete seven or eight progressively difficult missions, such as defending an airfield from enemy aircraft, sinking a ship or penetrating deep into enemy territory to destroy a nuclear base. Should you complete all the missions you're free to attack enemy targets as you wish.

Before each mission you are briefed by a cigar-chomping colonel. Then it's time to select up to six weapons from rocket pods, air-to-air missiles, 500lb and 1000lb bombs. There's also a built-in cannon. Once you return from a mission you can rearm, refuel and have repairs done. On long missions you might choose to land at one of two friendly land bases. There are also two tanker planes for mid-air refuelling.

The game uses *Rotox*'s Rotoscape technique, with the Harrier fixed at the centre of the screen. Left/right rotates the landscape around, while pushing forward increases speed and backward decreases it. Fire shoots cannon shells, but holding it down with up/down allows you to change your altitude. The function keys allow you to select one of the weapons you're carrying.

Once airborne it's a good idea to call up the map screen, this shows everything for miles around in real-time — the game doesn't pause. So you can navigate to the target while avoiding enemy fighters, helicopters and anti-aircraft missiles sites. Once near the target you can go to the main view, a useful radar scanner showing targets beyond visual range. Each hit on the Harrier causes a fire — four hits destroy it, as does colliding with the ground or another plane.



★ Lift off! One of the impressive animated presentation screens.



If *Wings Of Fury* drew inspiration from *Harrier Attack*, *Op Harrier* looks to *Raid On Bungeling Bay* for ideas. In both cases 16-bit hardware allows substantial improvement, the Rotoscaping technique is particularly impressive with lots of graphics moving very quickly: islands, jets, missiles and bullets all whizz round you at great speed. The ability to go down into the landscape, with everything zooming upwards, is very neat too. The presentation screens are absolutely superb, creating an atmosphere which I much prefer to *Rotox*. Unfortunately there's not that many missions. When you complete them you can fly your own against remaining targets, but it's irritating repeating the same old early missions over and over. 50 varied and random missions plus a save/load feature would've made a great game.



Sorry Stu but I can't say I was at all thrilled by *Op Harrier*. It's a weak shoot-'em-up with little in the way of depth or variety of enemies. The Rotoscape effect to my mind worked brilliantly as an integral part of *Rotox* but here it adds little to the gameplay and I expected much more in the way of graphic detail, at least a more convincing shrink/expand effect. Everything looks just too simple and cleanly laid out for my liking. *Operation Harrier* is *very* similar to Namco's *Metal Hawk* coin-op in play but lacks the speed or challenge to match it.

★ Attacking a SAM site — watch out for those heat-seeking missiles.



PRESENTATION 88%
Attractive animated take-off/landing screens, different for carrier and land bases, plus sea/ground crash pics and briefing mumble by the colonel. Bypass them by pressing fire.

GRAPHICS 73%
Overhead perspective limits view of action, but radar compensates and everything moves very nicely. There's lots of detail on all the targets and it's generally better than *Rotox*.

SOUND 75%
A nice military tune provides an intro, while in-game FX include plenty of bangs and a good engine drone.

HOOKABILITY 78%
Good presentation gets you hooked, while the first mission is pretty easy. Bomb-dropping a little fiddly, but everything else works well.

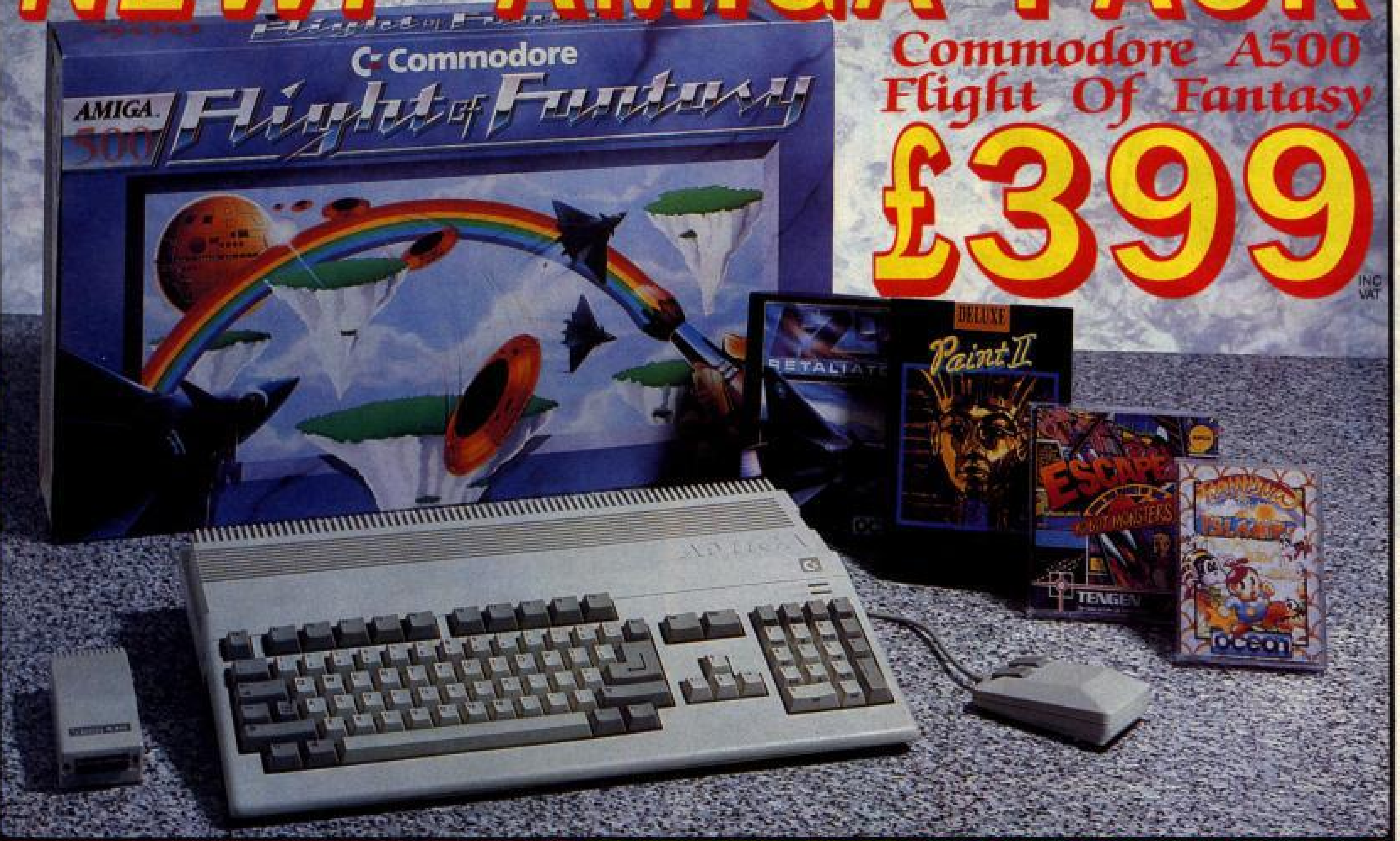
LASTABILITY 62%
Seven or eight varied missions don't provide a massive challenge. Freedom to bomb everything thereafter can't compensate for repetitiveness of going through same missions over and over in the same order.

OVERALL 70%

A fun and playable game, marred by lack of depth.

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THE PREVIEWS

SWIV
(Storm)

Silkworm IV or not *Silkworm IV*? That is the question as The Sales Curve work on the follow up to the Sizzling *Silkworm*. Tell you what, have a go of the classy demo of *Swiv* on this issue's Mega-Tape and decide for yourself. Things have changed since the original, the action is going vertical now (which gives the player controlling the jeep a fairer chance of survival) and the speed of it all has been bumped up (faster than *Silkworm* all round and even more frantic action), with not the slightest sign of flicker on the demo that we saw (as shown by the screenshots—minus a Pause mode unfortunately). The attention to detail is remarkable even at this early stage: each gun has its own recoil, shrapnel is aplenty (the spinning shards from an exploding pill box glisten as they spin), real fast moving jets, tanks, the Goose Copter and there's more military hardware here than Saddam Hussein has 'guests'.



★ The Sales Curve's vertically scrolling blast'-em-up, *Swiv*. (C64)



★ There may be a jeep and helicopter in *Swiv*, but it ISN'T the follow-up to *Silkworm*!

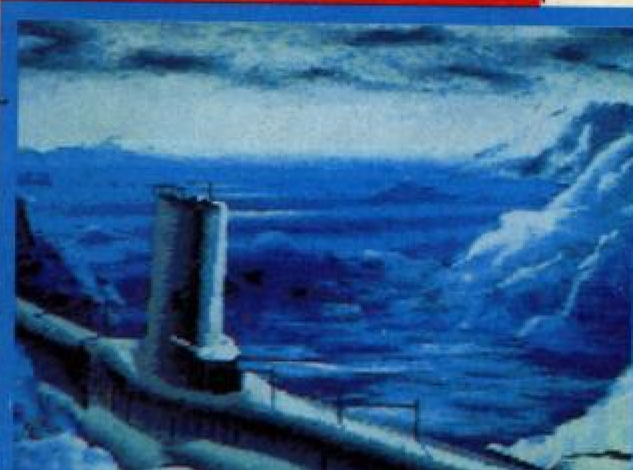
★ Hectic shoot-'em-up action in Activision's *Atomic Robokid*. (Amiga)





★ Developed with full co-operation with TASS (the Soviet news agency), *MiG-29* will feature a series of varied missions, taking you from the chill of the Baltic to hot spots like the Persian Gulf. (Amiga only)

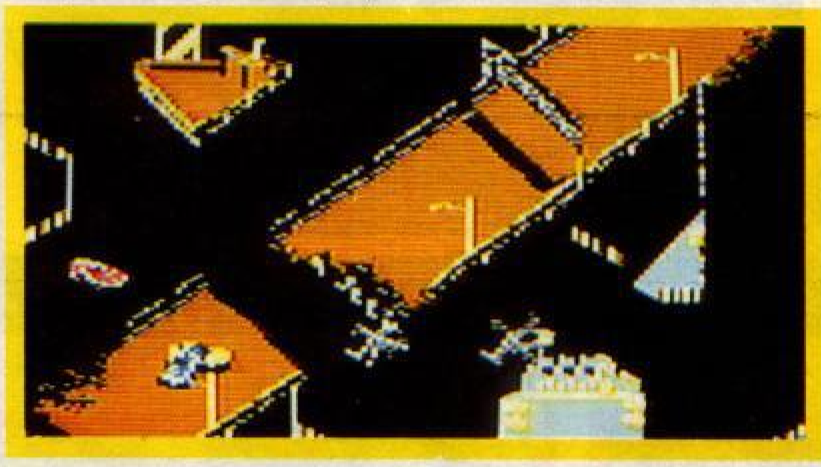




★ Kill enough villains and you're given full *E-Swat* armour, a tough exoskeleton to protect you through 15 levels. (Amiga)



★ The ultimate Demolition Derby, Domark's *Badlands* allows one or two players to customise their cars with anything from better engines and tyres to deadly missiles. (C64)



★ Activision's impressive *Dragonbreed* conversion. In the finished game you'll be able to get off the dragon at certain stages. (Amiga)



★ The long-delayed *Chaos Strikes Back* is now finally almost ready for release, with improved graphics, for one megabyte Amigas only.



★ 'Ello 'ello, it's the toughest division of the Cyber City Police, known as *E-Swat*. (C64)



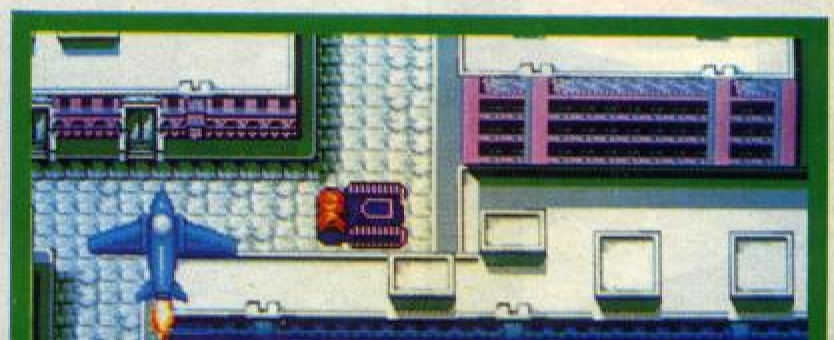
★ Wotadump — this place is untidier than the ZZAP! office!



★ Test your driving skills over several tough courses in Gremlin's *Celica GT4 Rally*, based on the high-performance Toyota rally car. There's even an option for a computer navigator who uses sampled speech to guide you. (Amiga)



★ Imageworks are currently polishing up the American *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* with improved presentation and difficulty. (Amiga)



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